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the 1980s, the number of people in the population aged 65 and over has increased by 25% (1980 = 100).

There is a growing awareness of the need to plan for the needs of the elderly population. The Department of Health (1982) has produced a series of reports on the needs of the elderly population. The first report, *Ageing and Health*, was published in 1982. It was followed by *Ageing and the Environment* in 1983 and *Ageing and the Family* in 1984. These reports have been instrumental in shaping government policy on the needs of the elderly population.

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W. Overstich sculpt

C. K. Ledger R. A. paint









SCENES  
OF  
THE OLDEN TIME.

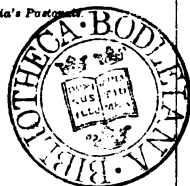
BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Records of Noble Lives," "Sunshine of Domestic Life,"  
"The Boy Makes the Man," &c.*

*John Ruskin*

"My muse for lofty pitches shall not roam,  
But homely pipen of her native home."

WILLIAM BROWNE, *Britannia's Postman*



LONDON:  
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;  
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.


1867.

226. k. 57



A decorative floral ornament with the word "PREFACE" in the center, surrounded by intricate scrollwork and leaves.

## PREFACE

A decorative initial letter 'T' with a floral and vine motif.

THE author has brought together in the following pages some notes and anecdotes in reference to the manners and customs of our forefathers, with brief sketches of the different seasons of the year, and historical details of certain memorable Anniversary Days. Thus, the origin and observances of Valentine's day, May-day, April Fool's day, Midsummer day, Christmas, and Twelfth day are here described; the aspects of the country at different periods are briefly indicated; something is said about the birds and flowers peculiar to each; and comprehensive accounts are furnished of those great national pastimes, archery, hawking, and the tournament. The author has sought to maintain the young reader's interest in these subjects by copious quotations and allusions, and the introduction, where suitable, of song and legend. He

trusts, therefore, they will find both entertainment and instruction in those Scenes of the Olden Time which he has attempted to depict, and which he has represented without any exaggeration of colouring. The Past has its lessons, if we study it in a proper spirit; lessons which may serve for the behoof of the Present.



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## SCENES OF OLDEN TIME.

### I.

#### Twelfth Day. -

"Here sundrie friends together come, and meet in companie,  
And make a king amongst themselves by voyce or destiny:  
Who after princely guise appoyntes his officers alway,  
Then unto feasting do they go, and long time after play."

NAOGEORGUS, translated by Barnabe Googe.



OLD TWELFTH DAY," in these modern times, has been shorn of almost all his splendours. He no longer bears himself like a king, and commands the admiration and loyal service of his liege subjects, but steals on his way with bated breath, or gives a timid glance at us now and then from a confectioner's shop-window. Like many other ancient royalties, his state has disappeared; his crown has become a shadow, his sceptre a reed, his kingdom a name. There are few who do him reverence, and even these worshippers are but faint-hearted in their homage, contenting themselves with a very phantom and mock of loyalty. Twelfth Day!

Not one in a thousand knows when he comes, or cares when he has gone. Neither in palace nor cottage is his feast provided with any degree of solemnity. And yet, two centuries ago, his advent created an excitement throughout the length and breadth of "merrie England." In the palace, grand masques and mummings were celebrated; in the cottage, great cakes shone and glittered on the simple board. Everywhere he received a right jovial welcome, and he counted his subjects by thousands and tens of thousands. We are not such holiday-makers as our ancestors. We live faster, but I am not sure that we live wiser. It may be that we work harder, though some good hard work was done in the days when Elizabeth was queen: at all events, we have fewer feasts and revels, for our forefathers were bent on making a holiday whenever the slightest opportunity presented itself, while we seem afraid of enjoying one, even when it is offered to us. So, to see what Twelfth Day means, or meant, and how the old king was entertained, we must go back to the "olden time," and take counsel of the men who flourished under the Tudors and the Stuarts.

Twelfth Day: why so called?—This question every boy and girl can answer. It is the *twelfth day from Christmas*. In the Church Calendar it is called also the Epiphany. And wherefore? Because it commemorates the Manifestation (Greek, *Ἐπιφάνεια*) of Christ to the Gentiles—and refers to that strange scene when the wise men came from the far lands of the East, star-led over plains, and hills, and valleys,

to worship the infant Saviour in his human mother's arms. As an old poet sings,—

“Look up, sweet Babe, look up and see,  
For love of Thee,  
Thus far from home  
The East is come,  
To seek herself in Thy sweet eyes.

*First Wise Man.*—We who strangely went astray,  
Lost in a bright  
Meridian night,

*Second.*—A darkness made of too much day,

*Third.*— Beckoned from far  
By Thy fair star,  
Lo, at last, have found our way.”

CRASHAW.

Tradition made these wise men, or Magi, three in number, and represented them to be of royal dignity. Hence, all the customs peculiar to Twelfth Day have more or less reference to the three kings. Their names are said to have been Melchior, an aged man with a long beard; Jasper, a beardless youth; and Balthazar, a Moor or Saracen, with spreading beard. It was believed that Melchior offered to the Holy Babe a gift of *gold*, in testimony of his royalty as the expected King of the Jews; Jasper, *frankincense*, in acknowledgment of his divinity; and Balthazar, *myrrh*, in allusion to the bitter cares and sorrows which the Saviour took upon him with his humanity. The old legends relate that their bodies were afterwards removed from the East by the pious Empress Helena, and carried to the great new city of Byzantium or Constantinople. Afterwards, they were transferred to Milan, where the Emperor Frederick found them, in 1164, on capturing that once-famous place, and presented them to the Archbishop of

Cologne. The visitor to the beautiful cathedral of that ancient city is now shown their bones as a precious relic, enshrined in a casket of gold, and, if he be very credulous and very simple, he will believe the tale that is told respecting them.

In every Christian country, on the day of Epiphany, the three kings were honoured with special observances. In England it was customary for the sovereign, either personally, or through his chamberlain, to deposit on the sacred altar gold, frankincense, and myrrh. A play, or mystery, was performed in public by three priests, in which all the incidents of the Magian visit to Bethlehem were dramatized. Clothed in royal robes, with their servants carrying costly gifts, the three met before the altar, and after some few words of explanation, began to sing. Then a voice would exclaim: "Let the Magi come." A crown, with a star shaped like a cross, immediately kindled into light, and a curtain being drawn aside, a sleeping child was revealed, before whom the three kings knelt in worship. Offerings were made of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and the Magi continued praying until they fell asleep; when a boy, clothed in a white robe, appeared, and addressed them with: "All things which the prophets said are fulfilled."

A further mode of commemoration, and one which was really universal, was the Election of Kings by beans. For this purpose a great cake was made, in which a bean and a pea were concealed. After it had been baked, it was divided into as many portions as there were members in a family, so that when

distributed each might obtain a share. Whoever drew the bean was declared King; whoever received the pea was appointed Queen; and the two sovereigns then chose the various officers of their royal court, and presided over the festivities of the evening. Quaint old Herrick has a pleasant song in praise of this custom:—

“Now, now the mirth comes  
With the cake full of plums,  
Where *bean's* the King of the sport here;  
Besides we must know,  
The *pea* also  
Must revel as Queen in the court here.

“Begin then to choose  
(This night as ye use)  
Who shall for the present delight here;  
Be a King by the lot,  
And who shall not  
Be Twelfth-Day Queen for the night here:

“Which known, let us make  
Joy-sops with the cake;  
And let not a man then be seen here,  
Who unurged will not drink,  
To the base from the brink,  
A health to the King and the Queen here.

“Next crown the bowl full  
With gentle lamb's wool;  
Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger;  
With store of ale too;  
And thus ye must do  
To make the wassail a swinger.

“Give then to the King  
And Queen wassalling;  
And though with ale ye be wet here;  
Yet part ye from hence,  
As free from offence,  
As when ye innocent met here.”

We read that on Twelfth-Day 1563, Mary Queen of Scots celebrated the time-honoured custom of the

King of the Bean, at Holyrood; but as she was a female sovereign she deposed the king in favour of a queen. The bean fell to one of the four Maries—her favourite attendant, Mary Fleming—who was accordingly dressed in a gown of cloth of silver; “her head, her neck, her shoulders, the rest of her whole body,” so beset with precious stones that she glowed like a dazzling mass of jewels!

It was customary under the Stuart sovereigns for a grand masque to be performed before the Court on Twelfth Day. For one of these occasions Ben Jonson wrote his “Hymen,” and a degree of splendour was lavished on the dresses, decorations, and scenery, which far surpassed the gauds and gewgaws of our modern dramas. Then, too, says a recent writer, we read of the English nobility keeping Twelfth Night otherwise than with cake and characters, by the diversion of blowing up pasteboard castles; letting claret flow like blood, out of a stag made of paste; the castle bombarded from a pasteboard ship, with cannon, in the midst of which the company pelted each other with egg-shells full of rose-water; and large pies were made, stuffed with live frogs, which hopped out quickly enough if any person of an inquiring turn of mind lifted the lid. How strange such pastimes would seem in our modern drawing-rooms!

The Twelfth-Day custom suggested to the great Spanish statesman, Olivarez, an historical repartee: when informed that John, Duke of Braganza, had obtained the kingdom of Portugal, he jestingly answered: Then he is but *Rey de Havas*!—a bean-cake king.

An old Scottish cavalier, after Charles the Second's defeat at Worcester field by the stout Ironsides of Cromwell, complained that his countrymen treated their young sovereign as the French did their King of the Bean; whom, says he, after they have honoured with drinking of his health, they make pay for all the reckoning!

It is worth our remembrance, as a curious instance of the excesses into which political fanaticism hurries men, that, at the epoch of the great French Revolution, the Parisian Council-General decreed that "La Fête de Rois"—The Feast of Kings, or Twelfth Day—should thenceforth be called, "La Fête de Sans-Culottes"—The Feast of the Beggars. Their republican hatred extended even to bean-cake kings!

In some parts of Devonshire, on Twelfth Night, the farmer and his men, bearing a large pitcher of cider, are wont to visit the orchard, and then, encircling one of the most fruitful apple trees, they drink the following toast three several times:—

"Here's to thee, old apple tree,  
Whence thou may'st bud, and whence thou may'st blow!  
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow!  
Hats full! caps full!  
Bushel—bushel—sacks full,  
And my pockets full too! Huzza!"

These rites performed, they return to the house, whose doors are found fast bolted by the females of the family, and whether it rains heavily or snows weightily—whatever may be the weather—the gaolers refuse admittance until some one guesses what may then be roasting on the spit. This is

invariably some delicate tit-bit, or out-of-the-way dainty, not easily thought of, which becomes the reward of the person who first names it. Many stout Devonshire farmers, in the old days of superstitious credulity, devoutly believed that their orchards would bear no golden fruit if this strange ceremony were neglected. It was probably a relic of the Roman custom of sacrificing to Pomona, which the Britons adopted from their conquerors, and which was handed down from generation to generation until all recollection of its Pagan origin vanished.

It was thus, then, that our ancestors celebrated the Twelfth Day after Christmas. We may imitate their good humour, their genial hospitality, and their innocent merriment, while eschewing the absurdities and superstitious follies into which they too often wandered. It is a beautiful arrangement, as Washington Irving remarks, that the Christmas festival, which commemorates the announcement of the religion of peace and love, should be made the season for gathering together of family connections, and drawing closer again those bands of kindred hearts, which the cares, and pleasures, and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose: of calling back the children of a family, who have launched forth in life, and wandered widely asunder, once more to assemble about the paternal hearth, that rallying-place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again among the endearing mementoes of childhood.





## II.

### St. Valentine's Day.

"Choose me your Valentine;  
Next let us marry:  
Love to the death will pine  
If we long tarry."

HERRICK.



"**T**OST thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?—Ay, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth, too!" And dost thou think, Mr. Peter Pragmatical, because thou hast numbered five-and-fifty years of bachelorhood—years which, from thy frosty and ice-bound aspect, one would suppose to have been all winters—thou shalt be at liberty to denounce and condemn those happy lads and innocent lasses who, on the Fourteenth of February (thrice-honoured day!), cause the myrmidons of Her Majesty's Postmaster-General to groan beneath the weight of accumulated Valentines? Nay, it is my belief that there shall be Valentines as long as youth retains its gleesomeness and sweet audacity of hope! And why not? Why should manly hearts be ashamed to confess what it should be the pride of all manly

hearts to feel? One of the cardinal points of an English gentleman's creed should be, reverence for woman; reverence for the sex that gives him the mother, and the sister, and the wife. What is there shameful in a young fellow's admiration of a fair face? And if Master Walter puts his admiration into words, and those words assume more or less of the rhythm and melody of verse, where is the folly or the error? Shake the golden curls about your laughing eyes, sweet Helen, in vain attempt to hide the tell-tale blush! It is very pretty, very artless, your girlish confusion; but of course *we* know, and *you* know, that you will bear about with you an anxious heart on Valentine's Day if the desired epistle—resplendent with embroidery and devices—does not arrive from Master William Frederick! Doubtless, your father and your mother—your grandfather and your grandmother before *them*, indited Valentines, posted Valentines, received Valentines, and hugely delighted in Valentines! Human nature is the same to-day as in the days of the Georges: the heart never grows old; youth never wearies of love-music and love-speech; and I hope and believe that up to the epoch when Lord Macaulay's historic New Zealander shall wander amidst the ruins of St. Martin's-le-Grand, good girls and pretty girls will joyously accept, and splendid young gentlemen willingly indite, the tender missives consecrated to the excellent St. Valentine—the best of all the so-called saints in the Calendar, as I am ready to asseverate!

Who *was* St. Valentine?

A Roman priest, we are told, who suffered

martyrdom, about 270, in bearing testimony to the truth of the religion preached by our Lord.

And why is he made the patron of lads and lasses on this particular day? Why is his name identified with this time-honoured ceremony? Wheatley tells us that he was "a man of most admirable parts, and so famous for his love and charity, that the custom of choosing Valentines upon his Festival (which is still practised) took its rise from thence." This seems a very poor explanation, and Mr. Douce, in my opinion, affords a more satisfactory one.

It was the custom, he says, in ancient Rome, during a great part of the month of February, to celebrate the Lupercalia, which were feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, whence the latter deity was named Februata, Februalis, and Februlla. On this occasion, amidst a variety of ceremonies, the names of young women were put into a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed. The pastors of the early Christian Church, who by every possible means endeavoured to eradicate the vestige of Pagan superstitions, and chiefly by some commutations of their forms, substituted, in the present instance, the names of particular saints instead of those of women, and as the festival of the Lupercalia had commenced about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen St. Valentine's Day for celebrating the new feast, because it occurred nearly at the same time. It should seem, however, that it was utterly impossible to extirpate altogether any ceremony to which the common people had been much accustomed; and, accordingly, the outline of the ancient ceremonies

was preserved, but modified by some adaptation to the Christian system. It is reasonable to suppose that the above practice of choosing mates would gradually become reciprocal in the sexes; and that all persons so chosen would be called Valentines, from the day on which the ceremony took place. And it is my firm belief that good St. Valentine would never have objected to an observance so genial and kindly, so full of innocent romance and poesy.

An old custom which prevailed on this day, has been described by a traveller named Misson, who visited England early in the eighteenth century. "An equal number," he says, "of maids and bachelors get together; each writes their true, or some feigned, name upon separate billets, which they roll up, and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids'; so that each of the young men lights upon a girl that he calls his Valentine, and each of the young girls upon a young man whom she calls hers. By this means each has two Valentines; but the man sticks faster to the Valentine that has fallen to him, than to the Valentine to whom he is fallen. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love."

Another custom arose in the accidental meeting of any two young people at an early hour in the day, who thenceforth became each other's Valentines. Gay refers to the custom in his poem of "*Trivia*":—

"Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind  
Their paramours with mutual chirpings find,  
I early rose, just at the break of day,  
Before the sun had chased the stars away :  
Afield I went, amid the morning dew,  
To milk my kine (for so should house-wives do),  
Thee first I spied, and the first swain we see,  
In spite of Fortune, shall our true love be."

It seems not improbable that the German game of "*Vielliebchen*" originated in some similar tradition. In this case the lad and lass crack nuts until they find a double kernel, of which each takes half; (pleasant exercise for one's teeth, I fancy!) and, on meeting the next morning, whoever first exclaims: "*Guten morgen, Vielliebchen!*" can demand a forfeit from the other. As the gentleman usually makes a point of being forgetful, a handsome present generally goes to the young lady.

Valentines are of great antiquity in England. An allusion to them occurs in the "*Paston Letters*," dating about 1476. The gifts differed in value, of course, according to the rank and position of the givers, but were often very costly. In that most amusing book, the famous "*Diary of Mr. Pepys*," we read that the beautiful Frances Stewart was the Duke of York's Valentine one year, and received from him a jewel worth about £800. Mrs. Pepys was the Valentine of Sir William Batten in 1661, and he made her happy with a gift of "half a dozen pairs of gloves, and a pair of silk stockings and garters"—surely an odd present from a gentleman to a lady! On Valentine's Day 1667, says the gossiping diarist: "This morning came up to my wife's bedside, I being up dressing myself, little

Will Mercer, to be her Valentine, and brought her name, written upon blue paper, in gold letters, done by himself, *very pretty*; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also," he adds, "this year my wife's Valentine, and it will cost me £5; but that I must have laid out if we had not been Valentines. I find," he continues, "that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my Valentine, she having drawn me; which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing of mottoes as well as names; so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did also draw a motto, and this girl drew another for me. What mine was I forget; but my wife's was, 'Most courteous and most fair,' which, as it may be used, or as an anagram upon each name, might be very pretty."

It seems to have been the fashion in Norfolk for children to "catch" each other for Valentines; or, if there were a generous aunt or a particularly liberal uncle in the family, great care was exercised to catch *them*. The mode of catching was by saying, "Good morrow, Valentine;" and if you could repeat this before you were spoken to, you could claim a small present. I recommend my young readers to revive this admirable practice for the benefit of their aunts, grandmothers, and other generous relatives.

It was an old English belief, that the birds selected their mates on St. Valentine's Day—a belief to which frequent reference is made by our poets. Thus, Her-  
rick says :

"Oft have I heard both youth and virgins say,  
Birds choose their mates, and couple too, this day."

Shakspeare has the following :

"St. Valentine is past ;  
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now!"

Chaucer represents Nature as addressing her feathered subjects :

"Ye know well, how, on St. Valentine's Day,  
By my statute, and through my governaunce,  
Ye do choose your mates, and after fly away  
With them, as I prick you with pleasaunce."

One more quotation, which shall be from Sir Harry Wotton :

"This day Dame Nature seemed in love,  
The lusty sap began to move,  
Fresh juice did stir th' embracing vines,  
And birds had drawn their valentines."

It was another popular superstition or traditional fancy, that the first maiden whom a bachelor might see, or *vice versâ*, on the morning of the 14th of February, would be, not only the Valentine, but, in good time, the "partner of his life;" and hence sundry cunning little contrivances were adopted, such as lying in bed to a late hour, or looking another way, or artfully closing one's eyes, so as to insure that the first person seen should be some special or already selected favourite.

When, however, the present fashionable custom of sending pictorial valentines was first inaugurated, no authority decides. It is certainly of very recent date, but has become so extensively adopted, that nearly one million letters—two-thirds of which

must have borne reference to St. Valentine—passed through the post on the 14th of last February. There is an infinite variety in the missives despatched for this purpose. Some are satirical, too many merely vulgar, a few are grotesque, a majority sentimental, and only a limited number attain any laudable standard of pictorial or poetical excellence. It is true that, within the last two or three years, a great improvement has, in these respects, been noticeable. The fancy of the artist, and even the skill of the perfumer, have been brought to bear upon their embellishment. I have seen not a few devices which exhibited a truly refined taste, and which a brother might fitly send to the beloved sister from whom he is parted by “leagues of ocean;” or the young husband to the newly-wedded bride, from whom he has been compelled to separate by the stern demands of military service. I see no objection to the good old custom of valentines. If the missives be marked by some touch of graceful feeling, they serve to stimulate friendship and encourage kindly neighbourhoods of thought. They excite a pleasant curiosity or a grateful emotion, which cheers a dull hour, and makes “a sunshine in the shady place.” Our modern life is somewhat prosaic—bald, unrelieved by light or colour. “The world is too much with us,” as the poet complains, and in getting or spending we “lay waste the hours.” Valentine’s Day, if regarded in a proper spirit, will brighten it with a transient flush of poetry, and bring us for the nonce within reach of the sweet genius of romance. Only, my boys,



remember your *devoir* as gentlemen, and eschew whatever is vulgar, coarse, irreverent, or grotesque.

"All Valentines," says Charles Lamb, in one of his charming essays, "are not foolish; and I shall not easily forget thine, my kind friend, E. B. E. B. lived opposite a young maiden, whom he had often seen, unseen, from his parlour window, in C——e Street. She was all joyousness and innocence, and just of an age to enjoy receiving a valentine, and just of a temper to bear the disappointment of missing one with good humour. E. B. is an artist of no common powers; in the fancy parts of designing perhaps inferior to none. Well, he meditated how he could repay this young maiden for many a favour which she had done him unknown; for when a kindly face greets us, though but passing by, and never knows us again, nor we it, we should feel it as an obligation; and E. B. did. This good artist set himself at work to please the damsel. It was just before Valentine's Day, three years since. He wrought, unseen and unsuspected, a wondrous work. We need not say it was on the finest gilt paper, with borders; full, not of common hearts and heartless allegory, but all the prettiest stories of love from Ovid, and older poets than Ovid. There was Pyramus and Thisbe, and be sure Dido was not forgot, nor Hero and Leander, and swans more than sung at Cayster, with mottoes and fanciful devices, such as beseemed—a work, in short, of magic. Iris dipped the woof. This, on Valentine's Eve, he commended to the all-swallowing indiscriminate orifice (oh, ignoble trust!) of the common post; but

the humble medium did its duty, and, from his watchful stand, the next morning he saw the cheerful messenger knock, and by-and-by the precious charge delivered. He saw, unseen, the happy girl unfold the valentine, dance about, clap her hands, as one after one the pretty emblems unfolded themselves. She danced about, not with light love or foolish expectations, for she had no lover; or, if she had, none she knew that could have created those bright images which delighted her. It was more like some fairy present—a god-send, as our familiarly pious ancestors termed a benefit received where the benefactor was unknown. It would do her no harm: it would do her good for ever after.”

I knew a lad who chose for his Valentine an aged woman, in the quiet little village where he lived. She had but a small pittance for her support, yet she never begged and never murmured. He bought a fine bright valentine, gay with many colours, and slipped within its folds his little store of pocket-money—five or six shillings—in postage-stamps. The good old dame was made happy for a week, though it was not until long afterwards that she knew the donor. He, too, was made happy by the knowledge of her happiness. And this I take to be the true moral and obvious intent of the ancient custom—that you should seek to promote, if only on this one day, the cheerfulness and contentment of some person or other, by gifts, however slight, or services, however trivial. Keep up the traditional observance in this spirit, and you will assuredly be the better for it!



### III.

## All-Fools' Day—the First of April.

"Next came fresh April, full of lustyhed,  
And wanton as a kid whose horn new buds.  
Upon a bull he rode ; the same which led  
Europa floating through th' Argolic floods :  
His horns were gilded all with golden studs,  
And garnished with garlands, goodly sight,  
Of all the fairest flowers and freshest buds  
Which th' earth brings forth ; and wet he seemed in sight  
With waves through which he waded for his love's delight."

SPENSER.



OW doth the purest and "joyousest" of all music go up from the full heart of the woods and the green depths of the vales : the nightingale charms the night with melody ; the throstle, the red-breast, and the blackbird, with strains diverse, express the jollity of earth ; as if Nature kindled under the genial influence of the spring, and rejoiced in the changeful but exquisite beauty of the wayward April ; whose face, indeed, half smiles half tears, has a capricious loveliness of its own, which the poets have not failed to sing. And well may they chant the praises of the April month, for it flings from its fertile bosom, and with a prodigality of love, the daintiest of blossoms,

and watches over the tender life of the young corn, which the cold March winds have somewhat chilled.

It is now that the almond hangs out its snowy blossoms, like fairy pennons, to welcome the happy coming spring. It is now that the laburnum bedecks its pliant boughs with clusters of golden drops. It is now that the silver birch shines with yellow flower and emerald leaf; that the fresh green of the limes becomes redolent of a pleasant odour; and the oak, and the elm, and the ash adorn themselves with young fresh foliage. It is now that the plum rears in pride its glittering crest, that the peach trees blush in the warm sunlight, and the cherry waves merrily in the air its garlanded branches. And it is now that the apple orchard glows in a mass of lovely blossom, which fills the atmosphere for leagues around with delicious perfume, and invites the bees to wholesale plunder among its sweets. Oh, after an April shower, what a burst of fragrance comes from the garden and the meadow, stimulating our senses to immeasurable delight!

"Sweet is the air with the budding haws; and the valley, stretching for miles below,  
Is white with blossoming cherry trees, as if just covered with lightest snow."

Now, too, the hedges of our dear English lanes—those leafy lanes, so lone and dreamy!—grow bright with their black-thorn glories; and the leas, and the sedgy banks of the streams, and the woodside knolls, are enamelled with a rich variety of flowers. What does April give us? Look around you, and mark.

---

The tall dandelion now lifts up his crown of gold,  
though scarce able to stand against the gusty wind.  
The cuckoo-flower, Shakspeare's

"Lady-smock, all silver-white,"

spreads its beauty over the moist patches of green  
meadow. The starry anemones now unfold them-  
selves in "woodland bowers;" and.

"Rich in vegetable gold,  
From calyx pale the freckled cowslips born,  
Receive in jasper cups the fragrant dews of morn."

A beautiful thing the cowslip, with its "crimson  
drops i' th' bottom," and its separate flowers or  
petals, from which careful housewives make good  
cowslip wine! Now, too, the marsh marigold lifts  
up its burning lamp; and the violets,

"Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
Or Cytherea's breath,"

awaken in our minds a thousand rare poetic memo-  
ries; for, of all flowers, I think the violet is dearest  
to the children of song. According to Keats, the  
nymphs who waited upon Endymion,

"Rained violets upon his sleeping eyes."

Barry Cornwall calls it the flower which "stands  
first with most, but always with a lover." Milton  
places the airy home of the nymph Echo in the  
"violet-embroidered vale." In the French truba-  
dour games of Provence, a golden violet was the  
reward of the successful competitor; so that Words-  
worth might justly assert,—

" Long as there are violets,  
They will have a place in story."

April also brings us the wild hyacinth, with its pyramid of bluebell-shaped flowers; the heart's ease,

" Appealing, by the magic of its name,  
To gentle feelings and affections kept  
Within the heart like gold" (L. E. L.);

the bright azure blossoms of the germander speed-well; the deep starry gems of the Pasque or Easter flower; and the perfumed bells of the graceful lily of the valley. Oh, blessings be upon the April! I love its shifting skies, its snatches of warm rain, its floods of glorious sunshine, its fresh cheery mornings, its clear cloudless nights. I love the April, for it brings back to us the swallow, with its tales of the beautiful southern lands, where it has so long been wandering. And I love the April, because—not to speak it profanely—it is "the promise of good things to come;" of the ripe golden summer, as yet standing timidly at the threshold, and looking in upon us with hesitating face.

The 14th of April is known as the *first cuckoo-day*, being the first or earliest day on which, as a rule, the cuckoo is heard.

" Oh, cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,  
Or but a wandering voice?"—LOGAN.

He sometimes appears late in March, but may most fitly be ranked among the followers of April, as various old country sayings indicate :

" In the month of April  
He opens his bill,"

says a Devonshire proverb ; while the quaint poet Heywood alludes to it in one of his quaintest stanzas :

“ In April, the cooooo can sing her song by rote ;  
In June, of tune she cannot sing a note ;  
At first, Koo-coo, koo-coo, still can she do ;  
At last, Kocke-kooke-kooke—six kookes to one coo.”

What is the meaning, O philologists—I must now inquire—of the word *April* ? Does it come from the name of the Greek Venus, Aphroditè ? Or is the month so called in honour of the mother of Æneas ? Or is it from *aper*, the Latin, as every schoolboy knows, for wild boar ? For my own part, I am in favour of the theory which derives it from the Latin verb *aperire*, to open—because it opens or unfolds the spring, spring flowers, and spring music. The Saxons called it *Eostur-monath*, after their goddess Eoster, in whose honour they celebrated, during this month, certain singular festivals.

The 1st of April is, as I need not to remind my readers, consecrated to the goddess of Folly, from old prescription ; and silly youngsters are wont, upon that day, to indulge in those foolish and often offensive jokes and mystifications which are supposed to transform their subjects into *April fools*. The custom is a senseless one, and yet it has prevailed from all ages and in all countries. The Hindus have their *Huli*, as the Romans had their *Quirinalia* ; the Scotch have their *April gowks*, and the French their April fish (*poisson d'Avril*). During the Huli, says a writer on Oriental customs, when mirth and festivity reign among the Hindus of every class, one

topic of diversion is to send people on errands and expeditions that are designed to end in disappointment, and raise a laugh at the expense of the people sent. But though the practice is so universal, and of so venerable an antiquity, it is impossible to trace its origin.

I borrow, from Hone and others, the following historical associations connected with All-Fools' Day :—

On the 1st of April 1712, Lord Bolingbroke stated to Parliament, that, in the wars called "the glorious wars of Queen Anne," the great Duke of Marlborough had not lost a single battle; and yet that the French had carried their point—the succession to the Spanish monarchy, the pretended cause of these wars. What a significant commentary on the folly of national ambition! Dean Swift, rightly enough, characterized this statement as "a due donation for All-Fools' Day."

It was on the 1st of April 1810, that the Emperor Napoleon married the Archduchess Maria Louisa. For the self-made warrior to ally himself with legitimacy, in imitation of the Bourbons and monarchs born to the purple, was a great political blunder. The emperor, as the Parisians affirmed, was, on this occasion, *un poisson d'Avril*.

The Duke and Duchess of Lorraine escaped from their prison at Nantes through the popular pastime. Disguised as peasants—the duke with a hod on his shoulder, the duchess with a basket of rubbish at her back—they both passed through the city gates at an early hour. A woman, who recognized them,



ran to inform the sentry, but he, disbelieving her story, cried out, "April fool!" And all the guard, catching up the supposed joke, echoed from one to another the exclamation, "April fool!" The jest was told to the governor, who, however, suspected there was something in it. But he was too late. The birds had flown, and the nest was empty.

It would be in this month, I fancy, that gentles and ladies of the olden time commenced their favourite pastime of **HAWKING**.





#### IV.

### Hawking.



THE squire would say to his comely wife—  
“The morning is fresh, and the sky gives  
promise of a bonnie day. Let us go a-  
hawking! I wager a gold crown against  
three of thy sweetest kisses that my falcon  
sights his quarry before thine.” Or, as a  
modern poetess sings,—

“Come, let us away! The morn is bright;  
The hills are steeped in a golden light;  
And the sun, like a new-crowned king, looks forth  
In festal pomp on the smiling earth.

“Oh, let us away! I care not whither,  
O'er hill or plain, so we wend together;  
For 'tis greater joy with thee thus to ride,  
Than as belted earl by a monarch's side.”

MARY HOWITT.

Sir Walter Scott has drawn an animated picture  
of a hunting party in the brave old days:—

“A thousand vassals mustered round,  
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound:  
And I might see the youth intent,  
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;  
And through the brake the rangers stalk,  
And falconers hold the ready hawk;  
And foresters in greenwood trim,  
Lead in the leash the gaze-hounds grim,  
Attentive, as the bratchet's bay  
From the dark covert drove the prey,

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THEORY

The theory of the present investigation is based on the assumption that the rate of reaction is proportional to the concentration of the reactants. The rate of reaction is measured by the change in the concentration of the reactants over a given time interval. The rate of reaction is also affected by the temperature of the reaction mixture. The rate of reaction increases with increasing temperature.

EXPERIMENTAL

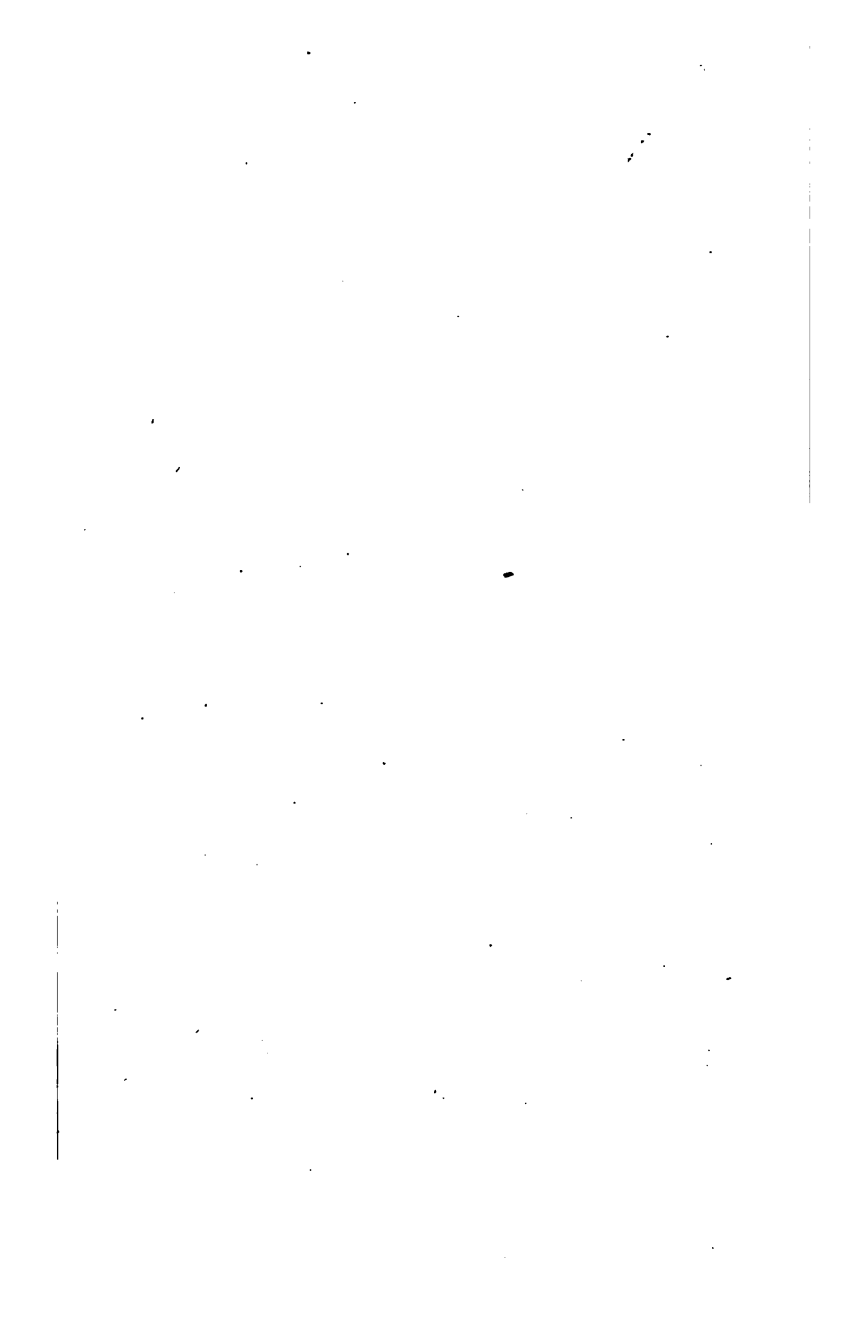
The experimental procedure was as follows. A known volume of a solution of the reactants was placed in a reaction vessel. The reaction was initiated by the addition of a catalyst. The rate of reaction was measured by the change in the concentration of the reactants over a given time interval. The temperature of the reaction mixture was maintained constant throughout the experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the experiment are shown in the following table. The rate of reaction increases with increasing temperature. The rate of reaction also increases with increasing concentration of the reactants. The rate of reaction is also affected by the concentration of the catalyst. The rate of reaction increases with increasing concentration of the catalyst.



*Hawking*



To slip them as he broke away.  
The startled quarry bounds amain,  
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain ;  
Whistles the arrow from the bow,  
Answers the harquebuss below ;  
While all the rocking hills reply  
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunter's cry,  
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Hawking was a purely aristocratic sport ; but though it chiefly flourished during the Tudor period, it probably originated with the old Norsemen, and was introduced into England by them. To train a hawk for the field became part of the education of every Saxon thegn, and in later life he seldom rode out but a hawk was perched upon his wrist. Even Alfred the Great condescended to write a treatise on the sport. The Norman nobles threw themselves into it with all the impetuosity of their nature. They reduced it to a science, and invented for it appropriate technical terms. The falconer became one of the principal officers of the noble's household ; the *mews*, where the hawks were kept while they *mewed* or moulted, was as carefully tended as now-a-days is a sportsman's stable or kennel ; a proper dress was fashioned for the hawk, and the bird regularly trained to its destructive task. For this purpose, a *lure* was made in the shape of bird's wings, consisting of wing-feathers set in a leather or velvet pad, quilted with needle-work, and with a swivel-hook on the upper part, to which a long cord was fastened. This was flung upward in the air, and guided to and fro like a kite. The hawk was taught to fly at it, as at a bird, but to return, at his master's whistle, and station himself on his wrist.

The bird's dress was thus: a close-fitting hood, generally of velvet, and embroidered with needle-work, was topped with a tuft of coloured feathers, by which the hood was removed whenever the "quarry" or victim came in sight. To the legs were attached a series of leather and silken straps, or *jesses*, to train the hawk in short flights, and bring him back at will to his master's hand, or they might be set free, and the bird allowed his own free course. To this device Shakspeare alludes in Othello's famous speech:—

"If I do prove her haggard,  
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,  
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,  
To prey at fortune."

Round each leg, just above the talons, was passed a small strap, fastened with rings of leather; this was termed a bewet, and to each bewet a small bell was attached. Much skill was practised in a flight of hawks, so to arrange the bells that they should harmonize together; and the ringing music—the "sweet tintinnabulation of the bells"—added greatly to the charm of the scene on a summer morning.

It is difficult, in these levelling times, to distinguish patrician from plebeian by any signs of dress or external 'haviour. In the Tudor days you would have determined the social grade of your fellows by the birds which they bore. A serving man was only allowed to fly the kestrel; priests were restricted to the sparrow-hawk; a yeoman carried the goshawk; an earl, a peregrine-falcon; a prince, the falcon-gentil; while the noble gerfalcon was honoured with



royal wrists. Whoever carried a hawk restricted to the use of persons of higher rank was heavily fined. Stealing a hawk was felony. In short, all the care and attention which the modern idler lavishes on his favourite spaniel, or the sportsman on his thoroughbred steed, were bestowed by our ancestors on their falcons and falconry. The sport was exciting, and possessed that element of cruelty which too often lends a double zest to human pleasures. Combined with it were all the attractions of a splendid spectacle; fair ladies, magnificent costumes, spirited horses, joyous music; everything that could throw a delusive air of enchantment over the pastime. A swift gallop across the hills and dales of merry England, with a bright blue sky overhead and a sweet English girl by our side, might well quicken the blood and stir the heart of any one of us, even without the excitement of contending hawk and heron. Therefore I do not marvel that hawking was popular; especially when I consider that, in following the hawk's flight, one was often required to leap over hedge and ditch, and to incur the delicious hazard of breaking one's neck. It was a scarcely less dangerous sport on foot, and with the aid of his hawking-pole, the true sportsman ventured the most perilous experiments. Henry VIII., on one of these occasions, nearly perished. His hawking-pole broke as he leaped a ditch; he fell short in the mud; and, but for the ready help of an attendant, the proudest of the Tudors would have been ignominiously suffocated.

"'Tis royal sport! Then, for an evening flight,  
A tiercel gentle, which I call, my masters,

As he were sent a messenger to the moon,  
In such a place flies, as he seems to say,  
See me or see me not ! The partridge sprung,  
He makes his stoop ; but wanting breath, is forced  
To cancelier ; then, with such speed, as if  
He carried lightning in his wings, he strikes  
The trembling bird, who even in death appears  
Proud to be made his quarry"—*MASSINGER.*

But as firearms came into fashion, hawking died out. The fowling-piece was less costly, less cumbersome, required no expensive establishment, and was more exciting, inasmuch as it did not require to be used by deputy. To fly your hawk against your neighbour's was well ; but the skill and merit of the competition rested with the bird. To shoot at a mark against your neighbour was better ; for the success was all your own—depended entirely on your quickness of eye and steadiness of hand. Soon after the reign of James I.—an inveterate *hawker*—the music of the bells ceased to be heard in the green-woods, and another old feudal pastime disappeared.





V.

May - Day.

"Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,  
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her  
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

Hail, bounteous May! that dost inspire  
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;  
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,  
Hill and dale both boast thy blessing!

Thus we salute thee with our early song,  
And welcome thee, and wish thee long."

MILTON.



OW is the time—if we are to believe the poets—when the earth puts on her serenest smiles, and all Nature hastens to welcome the youngling May, who comes from fairyland with sunshine on her wings, and profuse blossoms dropping from her liberal breast. Now is the time when the crowfoot scatters its gold, and the speedwell its azure, about the meads; when the hedges are balmy with the breath of the hawthorn, and late lingering violets love to nestle in the greenest places. Now is the time when the nightingale's "touches of sweet harmony" gladden the ear of Night, and the cuckoo's monotonous song bell-like peals over the silent plains.

Now is the time when the cattle rove at will the fresh green pastures, and the woodman levels with ringing axe the pride of gnarled oak and stalwart beech. Now is the time—according to the old chroniclers—when maidens should rise at early dawn, and hie them into the fields to wash their clear sweet faces in the morning dew—“sovereignest” of cosmetics! Now is the time when the glory becomes visible in the grass, and the splendour in the flower; when warm rains at night and cloudless suns by day do so fill the air with fragrance, and the heavens with beauty, that every tender heart brims over with happiness intense. Now is the time when the form and colour of the landscape call into life whatever of poetry, romance, or feeling lies hidden in the deeps of every soul; just as in the old fairy tales some magic word or spell summons inconceivable treasures from the bosom of the still lakes. How rare a green—bright, shining, like an emerald—the young corn spreads over the fertile earth! The flowers grow thick and lusty, and a constant murmur is in our ears of heavily-laden bees trooping home to far-off hives with their store of honied sweets. The cawing rooks, as they wheel to and fro in mysterious evolutions, describe fantastic shadows on the sward; the loud cry of the woodpecker rings from the neighbouring tree; every bird is pouring out his full heart in a jubilant tide of song, between whose ebbs and flows we catch the low undertone of the cooing ring-doves. And see, the air is full of flying jewels—of winged gems, misnamed butterflies—which shake out to the sunshine their glancing plumes of ruby,

and sapphire, and “translucent amethyst,” and flutter from flower to flower, and leaf to leaf, like the delicate humming-birds of Tropic regions! But most they love—so it seems to me—the hedgerow with its milky hawthorn blossoms, whose subtle fragrance exceeds in sweetness all the Sabæan odours that ever rose in incense round an Eastern god. The May—as we English call it—pink, pink-white, or rosy red; fresh, and beautiful, and fragrant ever, but freshest, most beautiful, and most fragrant, when sparkling with the pearly drops of a morning shower.

Now every bank, and every glen, and every hollow in the sheltered wood are thronged as thickly with flowers as a young man’s mind with fancies. Crown the Queen of the May with a garland! Well, what blossoms will you weave in it? Here is the graceful white campion; here the beautiful crane’s bill geranium. Do not forget the wee white flowers of the scented woodruff, or the bright green, heart-shaped leaves of Ireland’s shamrock, the wood-sorrel. Golden buttercups, of course, you will take in abundance, and ragged robin, the cuckoo flower, and the delicate stitchwort. To complete the coronal, you now only need a knot of orchises, and of these you may choose any fanciful variety, whether it resembles a bee, a spider, or a butterfly. The wreath is then perfect, and worthy of the fairest brow.

Let us thank God that earth is beautiful, for the beauty of earth is all our own, to enjoy when and how we will, and to take to our innermost hearts as a thing of price. It belongs to age and youth, wealth and poverty, the happy and the miserable, the loved

and loveless. Now, in this sweet month of May, let us make the most of it—of all that is fair to the eye and sweet to the ear—for so shall we treasure up inexhaustible stores of fancies and sweet thoughts against the dark days when shadows fall upon the soul!

A modern poet—less known, I think, than his merits deserve—has a charming description of May, “the moneth glad” (so Chaucer calls it) “that singeth on the spray!” He speaks of it thus:—

“A sweet exhaustion seems to hold  
In spells of calm the shrouded eve;  
The gorse itself a beamless gold  
Puts forth, yet nothing seems to grieve.

“The dewy chaplets hang on air;  
The willowy fields are silver-gray;  
Sad odours wander here and there;  
And yet we feel that it is May.

“Relaxed, and with a broken flow,  
From dripping bowers low carols swell  
In mellow, glassier tones, as though  
They mounted through a bubbling well.

“The crimson orchis scarce sustains  
Upon its drenched and drooping spire  
The burden of the warm soft rains;  
The purple hills grow nigh and nigher.

“Nature, suspending lovely toils,  
On expectations lovelier broods,  
Listening with lifted hands, while coils  
The flooded rivulet through the woods.

“She sees, drawn out in vision clear,  
A world with summer radiance dressed,  
And all the glories of that year  
Which sleeps within her virgin breast.”

SIR AUBREY DE VERE.

I sometimes think our ancestors had a more vigor-

ous poetical sense than we have. Money-making and commercial competition had not deadened their love of nature, had not blunted their keen zest for all its sights and sounds. On the arrival of May, which they knew to be the immediate forerunner and herald of glorious summer, their hearts ran riot in merriment. All England seems to have gone forth into the woods and the meadows, as if it were the proper business of life to listen to singing birds, and gather blooming flowers. They were not so afraid—the men and women of those lusty times—of being happy as we are. They gave themselves holidays, and they enjoyed them. They could find entertainment in such simple things; while we, cool, polished, indifferent, can hardly be roused into enthusiasm by anything less than a state procession. Let me read you a leaf from an old chronicle:—

“In the month of May, namely, on May-day, in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kind. And for example hereof, Edward Hall hath noted, that King Henry VIII., as in the third of his reign, and divers other years, so namely in the seventh of his reign, on May-day in the morning, with Queen Katherine his wife, accompanied with many lords and ladies, rode a-Maying from Greenwich to the high ground of Shooter’s Hill; where, as they passed by the way, they espied a company of tall yeomen clothed all in green, with green hoods, and with bows and arrows, to the

number of two hundred. One being their chieftain was called Robin Hood, who required the king and all his company to stay and see his men shoot; whereunto the king granting, Robin Hood whistled, and all the two hundred archers shot off, loosing all at once, and when he whistled again, they likewise shot again. Their arrows whistled by craft of the hand, so that the noise was strange and loud; which greatly delighted [who will doubt it?] the king, queen, and their company.

“Moreover, this Robin Hood desired the king and queen, with their retinue, to enter the green wood, where, with arbours made of boughs and decked with flowers, they were set and served plentifully with venison and wine by Robin Hood and his men, to their great contentment, and had other pageants and pastimes.”

As the king and queen returned towards Greenwich, they met on the road a flowery car, drawn by five horses; each horse ridden by a fair damsel, and both the ladies and their steeds personating the attributes of Spring. The horses had their names lettered on their head-gear, the damsels theirs on their dresses. First came *Caude*, or “Heat,” ridden by the Lady Humid; next, *Memeon*, on which rode the Lady Vert, or Verdure; third, *Pimphon*, bearing the Lady Pleasaunce; fourth, *Phaëton*, or the Sun, with the Lady Vegetive; and fifth, *Lampace*, guided by the Lady Sweet-odour. In the car rode the Lady May, attended by Flora. All these damsels broke into a chorus of sweet song as they received Queen Katherine at the foot of Shooter’s Hill; and so they

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preceded the royal party, carolling hymns to the May, till they reached Greenwich Palace.

It was with picturesque contrivances such as these that our ancestors amused their leisure. Even the grave citizens of London were wont upon May-day to plunge, heart and soul, into the merriest revels. They would fetch in "May-poles, with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris-dancers, and other devices for pastime, all the day long; and towards the evening they had stage-players and bonfires in the streets." One of the London parishes is named from the May-pole which, in old times, dwarfed its church-steeple. I refer to St. Andrew *Undershaft*, whose May-pole was reared every May morning in all its glory until destroyed by some fanatical Puritans in the third year of the reign of Edward VI. Another pole was wont to be set up opposite Sir Walter Stirling's banking-house, a few doors beyond the place

"Where Catherine Street descends into the Strand,"

up to the year 1717, when it passed into the possession of Sir Isaac Newton, who employed it to support his great telescope at Wanstead.

The May-pole was gaily painted in different colours; covered all over with flowers and evergreens, and decorated with flags and streamers. It was invariably of great height, varying from 40 to 130 feet, and the ceremony of planting it called forth all the lads and lasses of the neighbourhood. As Herrick sings,—

"The May-pole is up,  
Now give me the cup;

I'll drink to the garlands around it;  
But first unto those  
Whose hands did compose  
The glory of flowers that crowned it!"

When the rigid Puritans got the upper hand, and commenced their warfare against all picturesque and mirth-making customs—ignoring the great truth, that it is for the good of the body politic the humanities of life should be cultivated—they overthrew the May-poles and suppressed the village-dances; but, on the restoration of the second Charles, again these “shafts” lifted up their heads, and lads and lasses once more crowned them with garlands. But as the distinction between classes has daily grown more marked, and an utilitarian spirit taken possession of the minds of Englishmen, they have finally disappeared; or if a few still linger in remote and drowsy villages far away from the din of the railway, even of these the glory has departed.

“I shall never forget,” says genial Washington Irving, “the delight I felt on first seeing a May-pole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close by the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river from the quaint little city of Chester. I had already been carried back into former days by the antiquities of that venerable place,—the May-pole on the margin of that poetic stream completed the illusion. I value every custom that tends to infuse poetical feeling into the common people, and to sweeten and soften the rudeness of rustic manners, without destroying their simplicity. Indeed, it is to the decline of this happy simplicity that the decline of this custom may be traced; and the rural dance on the green, and the

homely May-day pageant, have gradually disappeared, in proportion as the peasantry have become expensive and artificial in their pleasures, and too knowing for simple enjoyment. Some attempts, indeed, have been made of late years, by men of both taste and learning, to rally back the popular feeling to these standards of primitive simplicity; but the time has gone by—the feeling has become chilled by habits of gain and traffic—the country apes the manners and amusements of the town, and little is heard of May-day at present, except from the lamentations of authors, who sigh after it from among the brick walls of the city.”

Had it been our lot, dear reader, to have lived in an English village some two centuries ago, we should have seen, on the May-day morning, its rank and poverty, its youth and age, trooping forth, as soon as the sunrise reddened the eastern hills, to gather a profusion of hawthorn boughs and flowers. Returning to the merry sound of horn and tabor, and their own sweet voices—

“Where to they dancen each one with his maid”—

they would decorate every door and window in the village with their fragrant spoils.

“See how  
Devotion gives each house a bough  
Or branch; each porch, each door, ere this  
An ark, a tabernacle is,  
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove!”

HERBERT.

This ceremony was called “Bringing home the May,” and hence the hawthorn-bloom came in time to be

known as "May." The next step was to select the fairest girl in the countryside, and crown her with a crown of flowers as "Queen of the May"—a relic, perhaps, of the Roman custom of worshipping the goddess Flora at this season. Thereafter she was formally enthroned in a sort of bower, near the May-pole, to receive the homage of all her loyal subjects.

I find the May-day coronation beautifully described by a neglected but most admirable poet. "I have seen," he says—

"I have seen the Lady of the May  
 Sit in an arbour (on a holy-day)  
 Built by the May-pole, where the jocund swains  
 Dance with the maidens to the bagpipe's strains,  
 When envious night commands them to be gone,  
 Call for the merry youngsters, one by one,  
 And, for their well performance, soon disposes  
 To this a garland interwove with roses ;  
 To that, a curvèd hook or well-wrought scrip ;  
 Gracing another with her cherry lip ;  
 To one, her garter ; to another then,  
 A handkerchief cast o'er and o'er again :  
 And none returneth empty that hath spent  
 His pains to fill their rural merriment."

WILLIAM BROWN.

Happy Queen ! Her reign was of the briefest—some twelve hours or so ; but then her power was immense, her popularity unbounded, and her crown brought her never a headache nor a heartache ! We have no May-queens now ; but let us be grateful to Mr. Tennyson for having embalmed their memory in one of the most touching and simply beautiful of modern ballads :—

"Last May we made a crown of flowers ; we had a merry day ;  
 Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;  
 And we danced about the May-pole, and in the hazel copse,  
 Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops."

Another May-day custom was the Milkmaids' Dance. Many a fair, fresh, and comely-looking group, in the brightest of country costumes, with gay scarfs, ribbons, and garlands, came dancing before their customers' doors on this joyous morning. One of their number would support a brilliant pyramidal mass of May flowers, and polished silver flagons, tankards, and dishes. Often they led with them a milch-cow, profusely adorned with garlands and posies, and were accompanied by a vigorous violin or cheerful clarionet.

In certain nooks and corners of Merrie England still lingers a pretty observance. In some of the Surrey villages, for instance, as the present writer can testify, the village children assemble in little bands, with gay wreaths of flowers arranged on two hoops crossed vertically; and thus decked out, they trip from door to door, receiving the small donations of the generous, and singing a simple lay or carol in honour of the season.

Of these ancient carols I think my readers will be glad to have a specimen :—

“ Remember us poor Mayers all !

And thus we do begin

To lead our lives in righteousness,

Or else we die in sin.

“ We have been rambling all this night,

And almost all this day;

And now returnèd back again,

We have brought you a branch of May.

“ A branch of May we have brought you,

And at your door it stands;

It is but a sprout, but it's well budded out

By the work of our Lord's hands. . . . .

"The moon shines bright, and the stars give a light,  
A little before it is day;  
So God bless you all, both great and small,  
And send you a joyful May!"

In London May-day is still to some extent commemorated by the peculiar festivities of the chimney-sweeps, who gather in small troops of six or seven, attired in fantastic dresses, with one gaily-caparisoned damsel figuring as "Maid Marian," and an equally gaily-caparisoned young man as "My Lord." These escort a strange figure called Jack-in-the-Green, being a man concealed within a tall extinguisher-like framework of flowers and evergreens; and around this central point they dance very clumsily, to the music of a drum and fife, for the sake of the few pence to be collected from by-standers. The show is but a poor one, and rapidly disappearing. It is obviously a relic of the old representations or mummeries of Robin Hood, which were performed on an extensive scale in many parts of olden England.

It seems desirable to say something about the Morris-dance, which formed so conspicuous a feature in May-day festivities. I take it to be a well-ascertained fact that it was a *Morisco*, or Moorish dance, introduced from Spain, or perhaps through France, where, under the name of the *Morisque*, it was certainly popular as early as the fifteenth century. In England it came to be united with the Robin Hood pageant, to which I have just alluded. Under this new condition, it included a certain number of characters who were all very fantastically attired, and the two principal of whom represented the bold outlaw of Sherwood and his fair Maid Marian. There were

also a frere, or friar (Friar Tuck); a minstrel or musician (Allan-a-Dale?); a dysard, or fool; a hobbyhorse; and sometimes a Moor, in allusion to the original country of the dance. The morris, I believe, is not yet extinct, though the old costume, of course, has fallen into disuse. I find it spoken of as flourishing, even at the present time, in Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, and Northamptonshire.

So much for the first day of May. Our ancestors, you see, welcomed it as a national festival, and threw themselves, heart and soul, into its traditional ceremonies. We have suffered the old customs to die out; let us cherish the old feeling. Let us love the flowers, and the sunshine, and the music of the birds; for these are pure enjoyments, which cannot fail to refine our natures, to kindle our sympathies, to encourage our admiration of the beautiful. I would not over-rate the value of a love of Nature, but I am sure it is too often *under-rated*. Though its absence, as Mr. Ruskin observes, is not an assured condemnation, yet do I feel that its presence is "an invariable sign of goodness of heart and justness of moral perception;" that in proportion to the degree in which it is felt, will probably be the degree in which all nobleness and beauty of character will also be felt. When it is absent from any mind, I fear that mind will be hard, worldly, degraded, "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." . . . Wherever it exists, it influences for good the character to which it belongs; and, therefore, I would have it cultivated as a part of every boy and girl's moral education and training.

The Irish cherish a graceful legend in reference to May-day, with which, in a versified form, I conclude these desultory notes :—

His chieftains stood around, his bards were there,  
And dazling Beauty sleeking her dark hair ;  
The cressets sparkled : harps rang forth a strain  
That swelled and sank, and sank and swelled again ;  
And from full flagons poured the ardent wine  
That shimmered redly in the tapers' shine :  
Soon were they empty, soon were filled anew,  
As rose the shout,—“ Long live O'Donoghue !  
Long live our chieftain—greatest, wisest, best—  
And long may Victory plume his stainless crest !”

Sudden descending from his seat, he strode  
Into their midst ! His eyes with prescience glowed ;  
His pale brow reddened with unearthly flame ;  
His gaunt frame shook ; a fearful passion came  
Up to his lips in burning words :

“ O shame !  
O shame upon our sons !” he cried ; “ I look  
With frenzied eye upon the fatal book  
Of the dim Future ! Blood-stained leaves I see,—  
Falsehood, and foulest wrong, and infamy !  
A slavish people and a tyrant sway ;  
A long drear night, a slowly-rising day ;  
The hired assassin lurking in the shade  
To take the life for which some bigot paid ;  
A weeping mother fixed upon the shore  
To watch the leas'ning bark which bears her store  
Of love and hope beyond the western sea ;—  
O shame ! O fraud ! O deepest infamy !”

Then through the trembling throng he stalked : his way  
In silence took where, deeply-gleaming, lay  
The moveless waters of the ample lake ;  
Regardless of the wailings which awake  
The wond'ring echo : soon they saw him glide,  
Serene and still, o'er the unyielding tide,  
Until, the centre gained, he slowly turned  
Tow'rd the high lattice where the love-light burned ;  
He waved his hand—a long, a long adieu—  
And silent waters closed o'er great O'Donoghue !

And yet he is not dead ! He lives, he reigns,  
Where sea-maids breathe their inexpressive strains,  
To sit once more on his ancestral throne  
When Ireland bursts her thrall, and stands alone.



And still,—when, in the coming of the May,  
Earth, sky, and sea exult,—at early day  
The chieftain rises; armed “from top to toe”  
In mail of proof, with silver all aglow,—  
His helm with snowy honours crowned,—and so,  
Upon a milk-white steed, with bannered pomp,  
And the shrill noise of clarion, flute, and tromp,  
Floats o’er the waters kingly,—while around  
Fair girls and blooming youths, all blossom-bound,  
Move blithesomely to music, such as ne’er  
An earthly harp could in its bosom bear !  
And then the banners flaunt, and voices wake  
With joyous cries the slow-responsive lake,  
And the procession gaily glides along,  
In fixed accordance with the triumph-song,  
Until the mists gather about the wave;  
Then, oh, how quickly wanes the pageant brave !  
The vision dies—the strains fall faint and few—  
And into shadow fades O’Donoghue ! \*

\* Founded on a tradition related in Mr. Croker’s “Irish Legends.”





## VI.

### Midsummer.

"A sound of song  
Beneath the vault of heaven is blown!"  
SHELLEY.

"Meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparell'd in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream."  
WORDSWORTH.



JO this most pleasant and genial month, the month of leafy lanes and blossomy hedgerows, and fragrant piles of fresh-mown hay; to the

"Jolly June, arrayed  
All in green leaves,"

our Saxon forefathers—brave men and true, with a spark of wild romance in their rugged natures—gave the apt name of "*Weyd-monath*, because their beasts did then *weyd* in the meddowes—that is to say, goe to feed there; and hereof a medow is also in the Teutonicke called a *weyd*; and of *weyd* we yet retain our word 'wade,' which we understand of going through watric places, such as meddowes are wont to be." Also did these strong Saxons pleasantly

speak of it as the *Medemonath*, or mid-month of the year, and the *Mid-somer monath*; and by either, or all of these names, to all lovers of "rural sights and sounds," must lusty June be welcome. For it is warmer, blander, more dulcet (so to speak), than May; as if the music of the year had deepened into a fuller and nobler harmony; yet does it escape the fierce heats and raging storms of July. Summer, as yet, does not leap upon the earth like a tiger—to use poor Alexander Smith's bold simile—but rather folds her in the bridegroom's fond embrace. It dowers her with a wealth of bud and leaf and blossom, till she glitters like a fair bride in all her jewels. It crowns the woodland with leafy honours; it pours a happy music through the groves. And it sends the haymakers out into the leas, to garner up their abundant and wholesome spoil.

How beautiful are the grasses in this midsummer month of June! It seems an excess of wastefulness to tread under foot such delicate and fairy things.\* What sweetness lurks in the white-globed clover, inviting the golden bee to depasture upon it! Look at the feather-grass, with its silken plume worthy of a knightly crest—at the glancing shifting spikelets of the quaking grass, with its thousands of purple bells—at the velvety meadow-grass, with whose emerald blades Titania might fitly carpet her fairy hall;—what images of beauty are suggested by their form and colour! Infinite is the goodness of God,

\* Upwards of two thousand species of grasses have been distinguished and named by botanists.

who hath sown beauty broadcast over the whole visible world !

“ So thick the blushing roses round her blow.”

This most exquisite line of Milton's occurs in his airy description of Eve's Eden-bower. Surely he must have written it in June, when rose-odours floated in at his lattice-window, and reminded him of the exquisite loveliness of the queen of flowers. Midsummer is the time of roses, when they reach their glorious maturity of perfection in hue and fragrance. Not only do they crown the gardens now with their richest bloom, but “ hang their blushing treasures ” in every hedgerow, and load the evening breeze with their delicate, subtle sense. Now, too, the sweetbriar, the poetical eglantine,

“ Exhales a breath  
Whose odours are of power to raise from death;”

and the delicious honeysuckle opens its long scented whorls, and yields their sweetness unto all comers. If you are weaving a wreath for Fanny's brow, bind together the yellow Iris and the purple Fleur-de-Luce, or Fleur de Louis—so called because chosen as his device by Louis VII. of France, on his joining the crusade against the infidel Saracens. Nor omit that blossom of sweetest memory and tenderest association, the Forget-me-not, which Harry Bolingbroke, on his exile from England, united with the initial letters of his watchword, *Souveigne vous de moi*; thus rendering it for evermore the symbol of remembrance, and, like the white rose of York and the red rose of Lancaster, the lily of the Bourbons,

and the violet of Napoleon, an historic flower. Historic, too, is the golden broom—the *Planta genista* of the old knightly Norman race—which now spreads its rich colour over the heath and wold. By the wayside, and among the woodland mosses, you will find the fairies' or folks' gloves—mistakenly called *Fox-glove*—

“ In whose drooping bells the bee  
Makes her sweet music,”

lifting its pyramid of purple or speckled chalices above all meaner plants. Then we have the sweet-pea, and the mallow, the nodding poppy, the little scarlet pimpernel, the trumpet-shaped white or pink blossoms of the trailing convolvulus; lupins, larkspurs, and ladies' slippers; the fresh nasturtium, with its mingling hues of orange and vermilion; snap-dragons and martagons; carnations, campanulas, blue and crimson corn-flowers;—certes, Oberon might gather now a splendid posy for his Fairy Queen!

And while Nature is thus liberal with her perfumes and splendour, she, not forgetting how sweet an accompaniment to a banquet is music, graciously fills the air with “rivers of melody.” The feathered choristers perform their finest harmonies for our delectation; and the attentive ear may distinguish the clear liquid strain of the jubilant lark, the fuller music of the blackbird, the soft warble of the thrush, and the pleasant minor tone of the linnet. In upon this sweet choral strain breaks the chatter of the magpie, and the loud, ceaseless clamour of the rook; while, towards night, as all other sounds grow faint

and die away, the wind brings to us, from the green recesses of the woodland, the ecstatic song of Philomela, "most musical, most melancholy," with which, like a sorrow-stricken minstrel, she relieves her full heart of its burthen.

Listening to God's music, thinking of leaves and flowers, and gazing upon landscapes shimmering in summer sunshine, I find my gladness taking shape in words which, whether I will or not, fall into the rhythm of verse :—

Oh, the June, the leafy June !  
 She is coming, with the tune  
 Of singing brooks and birds,  
 With a song which scorneth words;  
 With the glow intense of flowers,  
 And the flush of sunlit hours;  
 With the splendour of the rose,  
 And the wealth of ample leas;—  
 And her triumph redly shows  
 'Neath the pomp of arching trees!  
 And the morning and the night,  
 And the shadow and the light,  
 And the dawning and the noon,  
 All proclaim the regal June !

Oh, the June, the leafy June !  
 She is coming, with the boon  
 Of breezes warm and bland,  
 To inspire the gladsome land;  
 With an azure in the skies  
 Like Cytherea's eyes;  
 And a laugh spreads o'er the sea,  
 And the mountain peaks are bright,  
 And the woodlands fair to see  
 In the golden summer light!  
 So we chant a welcome lay,  
 Of love and praise a lay,  
 While the morning and the noon  
 All proclaim the regal June !

The Midsummer month contains some notable days. Who has not heard of the famous *First of*

*June?* when, in the year 1794, and at the outbreak of the great war with France, the British fleet under Earl Howe inflicted a great disaster on the French. On the *sixth of June*, in 1762, died Lord Anson, the famous seaman who made a voyage round the world in his ship, *The Centurion*, and captured the great Spanish galleon loaded with the gold of Mexico—a prize worth two millions sterling. On the *tenth*, in 1688, being Trinity Sunday, was born to James II. and Mary of Modena a son, afterwards known to Jacobites as James III., exiled King of Great Britain, and to history as the “Old Pretender.” Before the change of style, the *eleventh of June*, dedicated to St. Barnabas, a fellow-worker of the Apostle Paul, was the day of the summer solstice—midsummer day, in fact—when the hours of light reach their extreme tether. The old saying ran:—

“Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright,  
Longest day and shortest night.”

On St. Barnaby's Day, the priests and clerks in our churches were wont to wear garlands of the rose and woodruff. It was the death-day, in 1294, of a remarkable man, Roger Bacon, the discoverer of gunpowder, and a philosopher of bold and inquiring intellect. In 1847, on this same day, beneath an arctic sky, and amid a dreary waste of ice and snow (in lat. 70° 5' N.), perished the gallant explorer, Sir John Franklin.

On *June 13*, 1625, took place a bridal of disastrous omen—that of Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV. of France, and Charles I. She landed at Dover

and was married at Canterbury on the same day. Had this wedding never occurred, who knows but that Charles might never have suffered on the scaffold, as many of his political errors are attributable to her fatal influence.

June 14, 1645, witnessed the decisive battle of Naseby, won by Cromwell and his Ironsides, and a death-blow to the royal cause. "This is none other," wrote the great Puritan chief, "but the hand of God; and to him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with him."

The "hand of God" was surely visible also on the 18th of June, 1815, when the empire of Napoleon fell to pieces upon the memorable field of Waterloo.

Not less notable an anniversary is the *nineteenth*; for on that day, in the year of grace 1215, King John signed the Great Charter of English freedom, in the "meddowe of Runimede," on the bank of the river Thames.

The Swiss delivered themselves from the tyranny of Charles the bold, Duke of Burgundy, on the 22nd of June 1476, when the Burgundian army was crushed at Morat, among the mountains.

On *Midsummer Eve*, the eve or vigil of the festival of St. John the Baptist's nativity, our ancestors were accustomed to go a-trooping into the woods; and returning home laden with green boughs, these they planted over their doors and windows. And at night they kindled huge bonfires in every public place, round which the young men and maidens danced in exuberant mirth. So sings an old poet:—









*A Bridal Procession*

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*A Bridal Procession*

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"Then doth the joyful feast of John the Baptist take his turn,  
When bonfires great, with lofty flame, in every town do burn;  
And young men round about with maids do dance in every street,  
With garlands wrought of motherwort, or else with vervain sweet,  
And many other flowers fair, with violets in their hands,  
Whereas they all do fondly think, that whosoever stands,  
And through the flowers beholds the flame, his eyes shall feel no  
pain;  
When thus till night they dancèd have, they through the fire amain  
With striving minds do run, and all their herbs they cast therein.  
And then, with words devout, and prayers, they solemnly begin  
Desiring God that all their ills may there consumèd be—  
Whereby they think through all that year from agues to be free!"

NAOGEORGUS.

It was the custom on this night for the watch, which in London consisted of fully two thousand men, to parade the streets in formal array, each watchman carrying a blazing torch or cresset; and the nobles, on richly caparisoned steeds, and in full armour, accompanying the procession. King Harry the Eighth once went privately (in 1510) to witness the stirring spectacle; which, however, some thirty years later, he politicly suppressed.

With the superstitious fancies and quaint observances of St. John's Eve, I have no space to deal. And I now betake myself to those scenes of the olden time, so famous in chivalrous records—the Tournament and the Joust—which could never be more fitly celebrated than in the midsummer month—"leafy June."





## VII.

### Tournaments.

"There mayst thou see devising of harnais  
So uncouth or rich, and wrought so well  
Of goldsmithey, of broidery, and of steel."

CHAUCER.

"Where throngs of knights and barons bold,  
In weeds of peace, high triumph hold;  
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes  
Rain influence, and judge the prize  
Of wit or arms; while both contend  
To win *her* grace, whom all commend."—MILTON.



MUST confess that I often suffer my imagination to dwell on the knightly scenes and spectacles of the feudal days. Not that I would wish those days back again; I know how much wiser, and happier, and purer the world is now, than it was in the so-called age of chivalry—how much nearer class is drawn to class by mutual sympathies and common interests—how much loftier a standard now regulates the thoughts, hopes, and anticipations of men; but the fancy is stirred by their sounds of martial music, by their pomp of banners, by their mailed Arthurs and Sir Lancelots and Rolands, who charged

"Before the eyes of ladies and of kings."



I think of the castle-hall, of the tented field, and lo,  
for me, as for the poet Keats,

“Large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.”

Chivalrous memories crowd upon my brain, of crusaders and paladins—of rescued damsels—of brave deeds in the Holy Land—of fortitude, and valour, and generosity;—until I am tempted to exclaim, with Spenser,

“Where is the antique glory now become,—  
Where be the brave achievements done by some  
Where be the battles, where the shield and spear,  
And all the conquests which them high did rear,  
That matter made for famous poets’ verse?”

The age of chivalry as our ancestors understood it, of chivalry as shown in knightly practices and splendid tournaments, is past; but we can still be chivalrous in our defence of the oppressed, in our support of the feeble, our loyalty, our love of truth and honour, and gallant devotion to the grand old Fatherland.

Among the scenes of the olden time, the tournament holds a conspicuous place for magnificence and stirring interest. Its details have been lovingly reproduced by some of our most distinguished writers; and few boys but will have read, in the glowing pages of “Ivanhoe,” Scott’s wondrous description of the passage-at-arms at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; or, in the romance of the “Last of the Barons,” Lord Lytton’s fine picture of the jousting before Edward IV. and Queen Elizabeth Woodville. But probably the noble passage in which Dryden, paraphrasing Chaucer, paints one of these knightly spectacles, may

not be so well known to my readers; and though I am ashamed of such frequent quotations, I trust to please them and myself by transcribing it:—

“ At this, the challenger with fierce defy  
The trumpet sounds; the challenged makes reply:  
With clangour rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.  
Their visors closed, their lances in the rest,  
Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest,  
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,  
And spurring, see decrease the middle space.  
A cloud of smoke envelops either host,  
And all at once the combatants are lost:  
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,  
Coursers with coursers jostling, men with men;  
As labouring in eclipse, awhile they stay,  
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.  
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight  
Is changed, and war appears a grialy sight.  
Two troops in fair array one moment showed,  
The next, a field with fallen bodies strowed:  
Not half the number in their seats are found;  
But men and steeds lie grovelling on the ground.  
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,  
The steeds without their riders scour the field.  
The knights, unhorsed, on foot renew the fight;  
The glittering falchions cast a gleaming light:  
Hauberks and helms are hewed with many a wound,  
Out spins the streaming blood and dyes the ground.”

After the tourney, and when victory has decided in favour of the strongest and most fortunate, the king

“Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,  
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.  
None was disgraced; for falling is no shame;  
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.  
The vent'rous knight is from the saddle thrown,  
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own;  
If crowns and palms the conquering side adorn,  
The victor under better stars was born:  
The brave man seeks not popular applause,  
Nor overpowered with arms deserts his cause;  
Unshamed, though foiled, he does the best he can;  
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.”

The tournament was absolutely essential to the life and vigour of chivalry. How else was the knight to display his skill in martial exercises, his dexterity in managing the war-steed, his prowess with sword and spear? As page and squire, he went through a long novitiate before he obtained the coveted spurs of knighthood; and his reward was to be found in the public display of his valour and address. It was at the tourney that he proved himself, in rivalry with other knights, and endeavoured to win the sweetest of all praise—that which falls from the lips of love and beauty. Therefore, we must not permit ourselves to undervalue these institutions. They held the place which, now-a-days, is occupied by Public Opinion. They checked the brutality of the fierce and ignorant, stimulated the young to gallant deeds, and refined the spirit and manners of the age. They sprang from that same noble impulse which now fires the soldier to contend for the Victoria Cross, or the statesman for the honours of the applauding senate.

“Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble minds)  
To scorn delights and live laborious days.”—MILTON.

When some great prince or sovereign determined upon holding a tournament, he caused proclamation to be made that it would take place at a certain site, and on a certain day. Thereupon all the chivalry of the neighbouring provinces rose up astir in eager expectation of sustaining their old renown, or crowning themselves with fresh glory. In every castle and tower there was furbishing of armour, and as the day drew near, knights, lords, and squires mounted their

chargers, and merrily "pricked across the plain." At the appointed rendezvous tents were provided for the illustrious comers, who set up before them their banners or pennons, and suspended their shields or devices over the entrance. Sometimes the knights appeared in disguise, and assumed a mystic or distinctive emblem, but they were always bound to furnish the heralds and kings-at-arms with satisfactory proofs of their knighthood. The disguises assumed were usually borrowed from the old romances and *fabliaux*. One band of warriors would appear as King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table; another as Charlemagne and his Paladins. A love-lorn swain, clothed in ebon mail, would style himself the Knight of Despair; a bolder spirit, the Knight of Love and Joyaunce. The reader of Scott's "Ivanhoe" will remember that Cœur de Lion was known as *Le Noir Fainéant*, while Ivanhoe himself assumed the title of *El Deschidado*, or The Disinherited.

The place of combat was called the *lists*: an extensive area, surrounded by ropes or palings in single or double row. Two opposite entrances were provided, and at these stood the gorgeously bright heralds and pursuivants, blazing with many colours, and filling the air with the silver music of their trumpets. Without the lists was raised a pile of lofty galleries, adorned with rich hangings, garlands, and gay streamers; and their seats were filled with lords and ladies, squires and gentles, all decked out in the most splendid costume. A gallery more sumptuously decorated than any other was occupied

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by the sovereigns and their train, and a conspicuous place was reserved for the lady whom the knights might select as Queen of Love and Beauty. Between the galleries and the lists gathered the multitude, who welcomed each favourite or illustrious warrior with joyous shouts, and eagerly watched the chances of the combat.

The ladies were usually the supreme judges of tournaments, and no appeal was permitted from their decision. At times, however, they delegated their power to some experienced knight, who, on account of this distinction, was named the Knight of Honour, and bore on his lance a lady's glove or ribbon, as an emblem of his authority. When the sovereign was present the decision rested with him, but he was constrained to respect the laws of chivalry as declared by the heralds. The prizes contended for were helmets of silver, crowns of gold, costly jewels, or a fully caparisoned war-horse; and these were provided by generous ladies, or at the cost of the prince or baron who gave the tourney.

Before the knights appeared in the lists, their arms were examined by the constable, and those of a fashion and fabric proscribed by the chivalric laws rejected. In the peaceful tourney the lances were harmless, "the points being either removed altogether, or covered with broad pieces of wood, called rockets." The swords were blunted, and daggers and maces prohibited. This was especially the case in England, where tilts and tournaments enjoyed an amazing popularity; and strict ordinances were proclaimed to prevent the conversion of the mimic battle into a

sanguinary strife. The rules enunciated by John, Earl of Worcester, Constable of England, by the royal commandment—at Windsor—the 14th day of May, in the seventh year of the reign of Edward IV., may here be quoted:—

“First, whoso breaketh most spears, as they ought to be broken, shall have the prize.

“Item, whoso hitteth three times in the helm shall have the prize.

“Item, whoso meeteth two times coronal to coronal shall have the prize.

“Item, whoso beareth a man down with stroke of spear shall have the prize.

“HOW THE PRIZE SHOULD BE LOST.

“First, whoso striketh a horse shall have no prize.

“Item, whoso striketh a man, his back turned, or disarmed of his spear, shall have no prize.

“Item, whoso hitteth the toil or tilt thrice shall have no prize.

“Item, whoso unhelm himself twice shall have no prize without his horse fail him.

“HOW SPEARS BROKEN SHALL BE ALLOWED.

“First, whoso breaketh a spear between the saddle and the charnel of the helm shall be allowed for one.

“Item, whoso breaketh a spear from the charnel upwards, shall be allowed for two.

“Item, whoso breaketh a spear so as to strike him down or put him out of his saddle, or disarm him in

such wise as he may not run the next course, shall be allowed for three spears broken.

**"HOW SPEARS BROKEN SHALL BE DISALLOWED.**

"First, whoso breaketh on the saddle shall be disallowed for a spear breaking.

"Item, whoso hits the tilt or toil once shall be disallowed for two.

"Item, whoso hitteth the toil twice, for the second time shall be abased three.

"Item, whoso breaketh a spear within a foot of the coronal shall be judged as no spear broken, but a good attempt.

**"FOR THE PRIZE.**

"First, whoso beareth a man down out of the saddle, or putteth him to the earth, horse and man, shall have the prize before him that striketh coronal to coronal two times.

"Item, he that striketh coronal to coronal two times shall have the prize before him that striketh the sight [or eye-piece] three times.

"Item, he that striketh the sight three times shall have the prize before him that breaketh the most spears.

"Item, if there be any man that fortunately in this wise shall be deemed he bode longest in the field helmed, and ran the fairest course, and gave the greatest strokes, helping himself best with his spear."

The armour worn by the contending knights on these occasions was light but magnificent; each en-

deavouring to outvie the other; and each bearing some favour from his lady-love—a glove, a scarf, a ribbon—on his helmet, his spear, or shield. It was to the “bright eyes that rained influence” he looked for the reward of his valour, and the knowledge that they intently watched every motion inspired him to achievements of “daring do.”

As soon as the arms had been approved, the heralds made proclamation, “A l’oslette, à l’oslette! to achievement, knights and squires, to achievement!” and the cavaliers, making obeisance to the ladies, retired within their tents, and put on their harness. At the cry, “Come forth, knights, come forth!” they made their re-appearance in the arena, and mounting their noble *destriers*, or war-horses, placed themselves beside their banners.

And now, dear reader, let fancy bring before you the rude but stirring spectacle. Let it picture the richly decorated galleries, thronged with nobles and gentles, powerful burghers, and lovely women; let it recall the glitter of armour, the clash of steel, the inspiring sounds of martial music, the armed knights sitting like motionless statues, their well-trained steeds, squires, and pages in gay attire moving deftly to and fro, the surge and rush of the excited populace, the chivalrous pomp that everywhere exalts and dignifies

“The fine vocation of the sword and lance.”

And now the Knight of Honour throws down his warder, and the attentive heralds exclaim, with a loud voice, “Laissez aller!” The cords that separate



the two contending parties are readily slackened; the warriors aim their spears with firm and dexterous hand; every heart beats with a throb of fierce emotion; the air rings with the shrill silver of the trumpets; then comes a clattering of hoofs, a swift shock, a clang of meeting steel; and lo, many a good knight and his charger are lying prone in the dust, while, amid the acclamations of thousands, the victors blithely caracole over the plain.

While I write, the recollection of "old memorial tilts" comes upon me, and I seem again to do battle with Brian de Bois-Guilbert, or to couch my lance in the name of "St. George and merry England" against all comers. But best do I remember the famous tourney which Tennyson has so finely described in "The Princess," and which carries one bodily back into the fierce *mêlée*. It is thus that the prince, who fought in it for his bride, describes its phases:—

"It was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We entered in, and waited; fifty there  
Opposed to fifty; till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears  
And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder.

"On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks: part reeled, but kept their seats:  
Part rolled on the earth, and rose again, and drew:  
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,

The large blows rained, as here and everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield—  
Shocked, like an iron-clanging anvil banged  
With hammers. . . .

“I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies’ eyes. . . .

“With that I drave  
Among the thickest and bore down a prince.

“But that large-moulded man,  
His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me through the press, and, staggering back  
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
And shadowing down the champain till it strikes  
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,  
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything  
Gave way before him: only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:  
And Cyril seeing it, pushed against the prince,  
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
And threw him: last I spurred; I felt my veins  
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,  
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced;  
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
Flowed from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.”

The tourney was not limited to one encounter.  
The victorious knights returned to their barriers, set  
their spears in rest, and again advanced to the charge.  
They shouted the names of their lady-loves, as if the  
magic of beauty could command success. The  
heralds cried, “Honour to the sons of the brave!  
For love and loyalty! On, on, brave knights; fair  
knights behold ye!” The minstrels sang in stirring  
strains, and the by-standers rent the air with shouts.  
So went the fight. If any cavalier fought unfairly  
—if he struck his opponent when his back was

turned—if he did not deliver his blow honestly from the point—the heralds denounced the misconduct, and adjudged him unworthy of a prize. But he who unhorsed his adversary, or fairly shivered his spear against shield or helm, while keeping his seat firmly and managing his horse deftly, received the acclamations of all classes of spectators.

When the fray had run its full course, the lord of the tourney flung down his warder or baton, and the heralds exclaimed, “Ployer vos bannières!” The banners, accordingly, having been folded, the conqueror in the day’s pastimes was required to select some fair lady, who, as Queen of Love and Beauty (*La Reyne de la Beaulté et des Amours*), presented their rewards to the successful competitors. This ceremony concluded, all of noble and gentle blood repaired to the banquet-hall. The knights who had mingled in the fray threw aside their armour, and donned the “gay weeds of peace.” As they entered the place of festival, the trumpets took up an exultant strain, and the heralds conducted them to seats over which were displayed bright banners emblazoned with their devices. The faithful hound lay at his master’s feet, and the favourite falcon fluttered his wings on a perch above his head. At his side sat a lady fair. Then the meats were handed round, and the wine flowed merrily, while the minstrels cheered the repast with songs of love and battle,—

“Of Roland and the warriors all  
Who fell at fatal Roncesvalles.”

The rushes that strewed the floor, instead of carpets,

were next swept aside, and dancing succeeded; the knights taking precedence according to the number of their prizes; and as each cavalier and damosel stepped forth to join in the stately measure, the heralds cried aloud for "*largesse*," and acknowledged with lowly obeisances the gifts that were lavished upon them.

One day's amusement, says an eminent authority, did not always close the tournament; but on the second day the knights would sometimes resign the lists to their esquires, who bestrode the horses and glittered in the armour and cognizances of their lords. At the close of the day the festival was renewed, and the honours awarded with the customary pomp. On the third morning, a *mêlée* of knights and squires was held, and a final trial of skill would often take place between the more successful warriors.

The last tournament in England was held at Westminster, November 25, 1554. The prizes on this occasion were distributed by Queen Mary; and her saturnine husband, Philip of Spain, figured among the combatants. The first prize given by the queen was "for the best armour and the most gallant entry." King Philip came in as second, and the royal gift fell to Don Frederick de Toledo. The candidates for the second prize are thus described:—"Sir George Howard (brother to the unfortunate Queen Katharine Howard) fought very well; Don Adrian Garcias better; and Sir John Perrot best of all, and to him the queen gave in reward a ring set with a fine diamond." Sir John was a knight of gigantic stature, with a strong likeness to Henry

VIII. "At the pike-in-rank Thomas Percy (afterwards seventh Earl of Northumberland) acquitted himself right valiantly; Don Carlo di Sanguine with better fortune; but Don Ruy Gomez best of all." The last course was a tourney with the foil. Lord William Howard, the high admiral, won great commendation; the Marquis of Torre Mayore exceeded him; and all were surpassed by King Philip, to whom the queen very willingly gave, in consequence, the prize of a diamond ring. The darting of the Moorish jereed, called *jeugo des cannes*, was among the diversions of this festival. Philip and his Spanish cavaliers excelled in it, and thus gave the zest of novelty to the English tourney. "The king's grace," says an eye-witness, "my lord Fitzwalter, and divers Spaniards, did mount dressed in various colours—the king in red, some in green, some in yellow, some in white, and some in blue. They had in their hands targets and canes: forthwith they commenced hurling the canes at each other. Their trumpeters were dressed in their masters' colours, and they had drums made of kettles, and banners the colour of their garments."

#### JOUSTS.

ANOTHER pastime of a military character in which our ancestors delighted was the *joust*. As the presence of ladies was not indispensable, and as it was usually organized on a smaller scale, it lacked, of course, the pomp and circumstance of the tournament. It differed in other particulars, as the following brief description will show:—

There were two kinds of jousts: the *Joute à outrance*, or Joust to the utterance; and the *Joute à plaisance*, or Joust of pleasure.

In the former the combat was generally confined to two knights, who having differed in some matter of high importance, sought to decide the quarrel by the arbitrament of arms. It was, in fact, the precursor of the modern *duello*, or duel, and generally terminated fatally. Any lady wrongously accused, or any knight incapacitated by age or physical infirmity from self-defence, might select a champion to appear on his or her behalf, whose defeat or success was considered decisive of the guilt or innocence, injustice or justice, of those whom he represented. The reader will remember the use which Sir Walter Scott has made of this custom in his "Ivanhoe," where Wilfred comes forward as the champion of Rebecca the Jewess. The herald's proclamation is worded according to the prescriptive usage:—

"Oyez, oyez, oyez,—there standeth the good knight, Sir Brian des Bois Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood, who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca, to try by champion, in respect of lawful essoine of her own body; and to such champion the renowned and valorous Grand Master, here present, allows a fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat."

From its sanguinary character we may infer the absorbing interest of the *Joute à outrance*. If the defeated knight refused to surrender, or unless the

sovereign flung down his warder at the critical moment, his antagonist slew him on the spot.

Froissart in his chivalrous pages records a remarkable instance of the *Joute à outrance*.

In the days of English supremacy in France, two troops of French and English knights accidentally encountered each other near Cherbourg, and, as was usual in those fierce times, prepared to fight for the honour of their respective countries. All alighted, except Sir Launcelot de Lorrays, who sitting firmly on his steed, with lance in rest, demanded a joust for the sake of his lady-love. The English veterans, nothing loth, accepted the challenge. Sir John Copeland mounted his horse, rode from the press of hurrying cavaliers, and, in a moment, drove his "well-pointed ashen lance" through Sir Launcelot's side, wounding him to the death. Both his countrymen and his foes lamented this catastrophe, for he was "a hardy knight, young, jolly, and right amorous;" and it was the boast of chivalry that it nourished a fellow-feeling and mutual sympathy among all brave men.

The friendly Joust, or *Joute à plaisance*, was often held at the conclusion of a tournament, when the knight who had earned the highest distinctions would challenge "all comers" to "splinter a lance" for their own honour and the love of the ladies.

More frequently, says Mr. Mills, jousts were held at places expressly appointed, and, in such cases, the mode of combat was always specifically described. A knight would often challenge another to joust three

courses with a spear, three strokes with a sword, three with a dagger, and three with an axe. It was the rule for the combatants to strike at each other only on the body, or, as the phrase went, "within the four quarters." To violate this usage exposed the offender to the loss of his fair fame, and forfeiture of his horse and arms.

The weapons used on some occasions were similar to those employed at the tournament; more frequently, they were the weapons of war. But though swords were keen, and spears sharp, such was the address of those who wielded them, that, in the *Joute à plaisance*, blood very seldom flowed. To unhelm an opponent, or to dismount him, was considered a famous feat of arms, and, in the hot encounter of furious steeds, could only be achieved by the utmost skill and vigour. Helms flashed fire, lances shivered, horses and riders reeled with the shock of the charge; and yet, "when all was done," says Froissart, "there was none of them hurt." Not only was the feudal cavalier a right skilful master of his weapon, but he excelled in the noble art of horsemanship; so that it might be said of him,—

" He grew unto his seat,  
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse  
As he had been incorporated and demi-natured  
With the brave beast."—SHAKESPEARE.

But here I must close my reminiscences. The romance of chivalry has too strong an attraction for me, and leads me into an inexhaustible gossip. Such scenes of the olden time as tournaments and jousts can never be successfully revived. Can we



wish it otherwise? Must we not confess that beneath their picturesque splendour and poetic pomp lurked much that was sanguinary in feeling and coarse in spirit? Yet can I forgive the generous boy who, fresh from the enchanted pages of Froissart and Monstrelet exclaims, with a sigh,—

“The good knights are dust,  
Their swords are rust,  
Their souls are with the saints, I trust!”  
COLERIDGE.





## VIII.

### Archers and Archery.

" He was an English yeoman good,  
And born in Lancashire.  
Well could he hit a fallow-deer  
Five hundred feet him fro ;  
With hand more true, and eye more clear,  
No archer bended bow."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.



Our early English poetry the love of nature throbs with a passionate impulse. It borrows its inspiration from the changing skies, the singing streams, and the woodland shadows. The "merry greenwood" is its constant theme. It is always chanting the glories of hill and dale, of the flower-enamelled leas, of the fragrant sward, and the grand old trees with their wealth of foliage. I sometimes think that our ancestors must have enjoyed an outdoor life with peculiar keenness. What with jousts, and hawking, and hunting, and shooting at a mark, they must have passed two-thirds of their days under "the blue canopy of heaven!" Their poets expressed for them the delights of the summer hours. Shakspeare exclaims,—





## viii

Order and Index.

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See Appendix 1

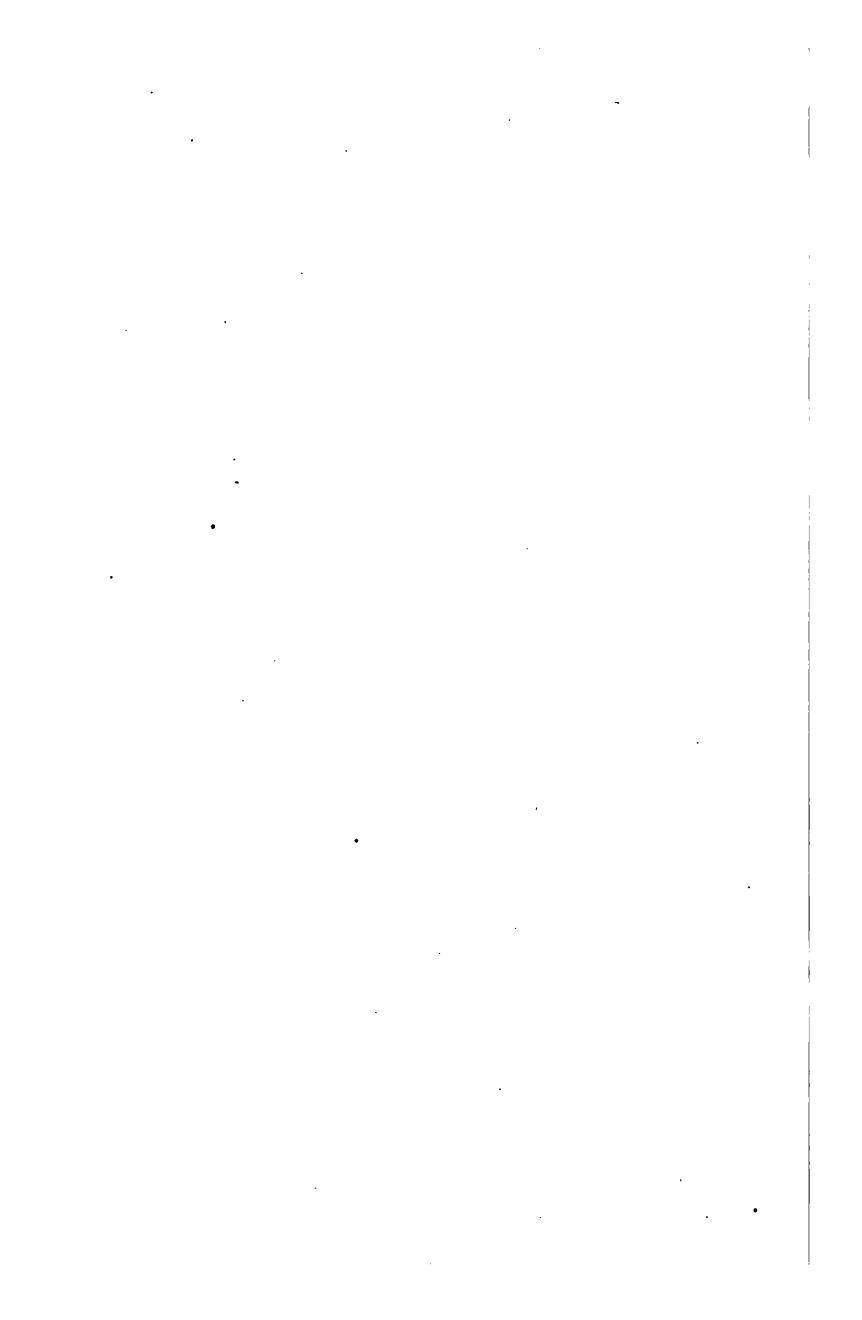
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Painted by T. Stothard, R.A.

Engraved by W. Gresham.

*In the Merrie Greenwood*



" Under the greenwood tree,  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And tune his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither."

To the greenwood went lord and lady, squire and page, man-at-arms and bowman. There they made merry with the sunshine and the bird's music, flew their falcons, bent their bows, or beguiled the time with song, tale, and dance.

" When shaws been sheene, and shruddes full fayre,  
And leaves both large and longe,  
It's merry walking in the fayre forest,  
To heare the small birds' songe."

The learned Roger Ascham, when portraying an ideal English gentleman, sets forth the following list of accomplishments indispensable: "to ride comely, to run fair at the tilt or ring, to play at all weapons, to shoot fair in bow, or surely in gun; to vault lustily, to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim, to dance comely, to sing, and play of instruments cunningly; to hawk, to hunt, to play at tennis, and all pastimes generally which be joined with labour, *used in open place*, and in the daylight, containing either some fit exercise for war, or some pleasant pastime for peace." All these were out-of-door sports and exercises, and their culture could not fail to encourage that love of nature—that passion for, and delight in, the "merry greenwood"—which we find so faithfully reflected by the minstrels of the olden time.

What pastime more appropriate for the greenwood than the most noble one of archery! Who will wonder that the bow was the Englishman's favourite

companion, and archery his best loved amusement? A bright sky, a leafy glade, a herd of fat deer, and a tough yew bough: what more could stout yeoman desire? But, remember, the love of archery, in the olden time, was almost synonymous with love of country. England's safety depended upon the skill and prowess of her bowmen. Crécy and Agincourt were won by the "cloth-yard shaft," and even so late as Flodden Field it was the English archery that claimed the victory. The bow was the national weapon, and it did good service on many a well-fought field. The stout Genoese men-at-arms, who fought for Philip of France at Crécy, hated it sorely. They could not stand against our English bowmen, whose arrows rained like deadly hail upon them; through hauberk, and cuirass, and shield, and helm; through head, and neck, and arm, and hand; in they crashed, ceaseless and resistless, until the Genoese could endure the pitiless storm no longer, but turned upon their heels and fled in a terrible panic. A similar fate befell the knights of France at Agincourt:—

"Like a storm suddenly,  
The English archery  
Struck the French horses.

"With Spanish yew so strong,  
Arrows a cloth-yard long,  
That like to serpents stung,  
Piercing the weather;  
None from his fellow starts,  
But playing manly parts,  
And like true English hearts  
Stuck close together."

DRAYTON.

We need not wonder, then, that the government vigorously encouraged the practice of the national



weapon; that rewards were provided for the best shots; that every parish had its *butts*, or shooting-places, as now-a-days each district has its "rifle-ground." On Sundays and holy-days, the young men resorted to the parish-churches in the morning, and in the afternoon were exercised in "shooting with bows and arrows," according to the statute "made for maintenance of shooting in long-bows and artillery, being the ancient defence of the kingdom." The bow was not, indeed, the customary weapon of the well-born; yet, in youth, as Lord Lytton remarks, its exercise formed one of the accomplishments of the future knight, and even princes did not disdain, on a popular holiday, to match a shaft against the yeoman's cloth-yard. Henry VIII. was a formidable competitor for the best bowman in the kingdom, and Edward VI. was scarcely less famous for his skill in archery than his pursuit of book-lore. In the fiercely fought fields of the Red and White Roses, the success of the White Rose of York was largely due to the superiority of its archers. The Londoners prided themselves on their mastery of the craft, and Bishop Latimer, in one of his sermons at Paul's Cross, boldly spoke of the bow as "Goddess instrument." At Westminster, at Finsbury, at Mile-end, at Islington, the citizens congregated on every holiday to prove their skill, for whoever neglected the shaft on such an occasion forfeited "one halfpenny and some honour." The butts, composed of turf, with a small white mark fastened to the centre by a very small peg, were placed apart, one at each end, at the distance of eleven score

yards. Whoso hit the mark, or blanc, did well, but whoso hit the peg did better! At the extremity, where the shooting commenced, the crowd of curious and excited spectators assembled, taking care to keep clear from the opposite butt, as the warning word of "Fast" was shouted; but loud grew the murmur, and many were the wagers given and accepted, when some renowned archer tried his chance. Near the butt that, for the nonce, formed the target, stood the marker with his white wand; and the rapidity with which bowman after bowman loosed his shaft, and then, if it missed, sped across the ground to pick it up—for arrows were dear enough not to be lightly lost—amidst the quips and cranks of the spectators, formed a diverting spectacle.

Holinshed, a graphic old chronicler, describes one of these popular shows on the second May-day in Henry the Eighth's reign:—

"His grace being young," he says, "and willing not to be idle, rose in the morning very early, to fetch May, or green boughs; himself fresh and richly apparelled and clothed, all his knights, squires, and gentlemen in white satin, and all his guard and yeomen of the crown in white sarcenet; and so went every man with his bow and arrows shooting to the wood, and so returning again to the court, every man with a green bough in his cap. Now at his returning, many hearing of his going a-Maying, were desirous to see him shoot, for at that time his grace shot as strong and as great a length as any of his guard. There came to his grace a certain man with bow and arrows, and desired his grace to take the muster

of him, and to see him shoot; for at that time his grace was contented. The man put then one foot in his bosom, and so did shoot, and shot a very good shot, and well towards his mark; whereof not only his grace, but all others greatly marvelled. So the king gave him a reward for his so doing; which person after, of the people and of those in the court, was called Foot-in-the-Bosom."

As firearms became more general, the bow necessarily fell into disuse, and even as early as the sixteenth century we meet with heavy complaints respecting its neglect. The yeoman and the burgher, you see, had less leisure in the days of growing commercial activity for the pastimes of the archery-ground. In the wars between Charles I. and his Parliament, the arquebus and the pike entirely supplanted the cloth-yard shaft. Archery, however, survived as a national sport for some years later. Charles II. and Catherine of Braganza often practised at the butts. The queen was patroness of the honourable fraternity of bowmen in London, and greatly delighted in witnessing their exploits. In 1676, a silver badge for the marshal of the brotherhood was made, which weighed twenty-five ounces, with the figure of an archer drawing the long English bow to his ear, bearing the inscription, *Reginæ Catharinæ Sagitarii*, and having also the arms of England and Portugal, and two bowmen for supporters.

We also read of a grand procession and festival given by the Finsbury archers, at which the so-called "Merry Monarch" was present; and when the titles

of Duke of Shoreditch and Marquis of Islington were conferred—according to a custom originated by Henry VIII.—on the most skilful marksman.

The length of the bow depended on the stature of the bowman, which it exceeded by one foot. The arrows, or shafts, measured from twenty-seven to thirty-six inches, were winged with the gray goose-feather, and made of oak, ash, birch, hornbeam, blackthorn, hazel, beech, alder, and turkeywood. The military bow was always made of yew; ordinary bows of ash, wych, elm, and hazel. The heavier arrows had a range of about two hundred yards, though Drayton, in his poem of Agincourt, speaks of an English bowman who

“ Shooting at a French twelve score away,  
Quite through the body stuck him to a tree.”

Far more marvellous feats are related of Robin Hood and his merry men, but the stern critic dismisses them as not authentic. Shakspeare says: “A good archer would clap in the clout at twelve score (yards), and carry a forehand shaft a fourteen and a fourteen and a half.” And the shaft was delivered with so much force and precision that it would penetrate through the armour of the best equipped knights. Good service was done by the stout archers of old on behalf of “St. George and Merry England,” and the romance attaching to their craft has still a charm for the vivid imagination.



## IX.

### Wells and Fountains.

"By this fair fount hath many a shepherd sworn  
And given away his freedom; many a troth  
Been plight, which neither envy nor old time  
Could ever break, with many a chaste kiss given  
In hope of coming happiness."—JOHN FLETCHER.



OW pleasant in the fair summer-time is the  
liquid glow of the fountain, or the musical  
lapse of a woodland stream;—

"a hidden brook  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune!"

How the ear rejoices in the noise of the wimpling  
burn as it eddies and swirls in its pebbly channel;  
in the clatter of the torrent that falls from ledge to  
ledge, and mossy crag to crag; in the soft murmur  
of the meadow-runlet through the whispering sedges;  
or in the joyous bubble of that brook which Tenny-  
son has made immortal, and whose burden he has  
embodied in verse not less melodious than its own  
sweet strain:—

"I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles;  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I bubble on the pebbles.

"I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river;  
For men may come, and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

"I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers."

How grateful, too, is the bright sparkle of the flashing waters, and the suggestions which they convey of infinite coolness! How delicious their icy flavour as they cool the parched lips and minister comfort to the burning veins! One could almost wish for the old mythic days to be revived that one might turn river-god, or naiad, according to one's sex, and lave one's limbs through the long summer-hours in the freshening waves! What more delightful than to lie on the enamelled sward, and be lulled into slumber or airy visions by the never-ceasing, sweetly monotonous fall of a crystal fountain? I declare that when the sun is high in the cloudless heaven, and the leaf hangs idly on the bough, and in the parched field the cattle pant with the extreme heat, I feel all the force of that fine passage in "The Faithful Shepherdess," where the river-god would fain prevail upon Amoret to live with him:—

"I am this fountain's god! Below,  
My waters to a river grow,  
And 'twixt two banks with osiers set,  
That only prosper in the wet,  
Through the meadows do they glide,  
Wheeling still on every side. . . .  
And if thou wilt go with me,  
Leaving mortal company,  
In the cool stream shalt thou lie,  
Free from harm as well as I;

And to make thee understand  
How I can my waves command,  
They shall bubble whilst I sing,  
Sweeter than the silver string."

For my part, I marvel that mortal maiden could resist such delicious charming!

Thinking of streams, and plashing fountains, and deep cool wells, I am reminded of the fancies which our forefathers cherished about them, and of the rites and ceremonies with which they were connected. Water was valued as a precious gift from heaven—*how* precious a gift it is the traveller in the sun-burnt desert will tell you!—and each famous well was dedicated to a saint; put, as it were, under his special protection, to be guarded from all spirits of evil. Thus we read of St. Chad's Well, St. Bridget's Well, the Holy Well, St. Boniface's Well. There is a famous well, dedicated to St. Winifred, at Holywell, in Flintshire; its waters were once reputed to be endowed with the most marvellous healing properties; the lame who bathed in them were made to walk, the deaf to hear, the blind to see. Even in Pen-nant's time, a few pilgrims might be seen in the water, in deep devotion, and up to their chins, for hours; sending up their pious prayers; or performing a number of evolutions round the polygonal well; or threading the arch between well and well a pre-scribed number of times. "The bathing well," he adds, "is an oblong, 38 feet by 16, with steps for the descent of the fair sex, or of invalids. Near the steps, two feet beneath the water, is a large stone. called the wishing-stone. It receives many a kiss from the faithful, who are supposed never to fail in

experiencing the completion of their desires, provided the wish is delivered with full devotion and confidence. On the outside of the great well, close to the road, is a small spring, once famed for the cure of weak eyes. The patient made an offering to the nymph of the spring of a crooked pin, and sent up at the same time a certain ejaculation, by way of charm; but the charm is forgotten, and the efficacy of the waters lost." Lilly, the quaint astrologer, relates that, in 1635, a certain Sir George Peckham died in this health-giving well! He continued so long "mumblin' his paternosters and '*Sancta Winifreda, ora pro me,*'" that the "cold stuck into his body, and after quitting the waters he never spoke again."\*

The present writer is acquainted with a wishing well at Bonchurch in the Isle of Wight. It is situated high up on the steep face of St. Boniface Down, nearly 800 feet above the sea-level, and on account of its position and remarkable elevation deserves its celebrity. In olden times the popular belief was, that if the well were reached by the devout pilgrim without once looking back, any wish formed while he drank the water would certainly be granted. Lads and lasses on St. Boniface Day—the festival of the saint to whom it was dedicated—would regularly resort to the well, and decorate it with garlands of flowers, while all vessels sailing in the neighbouring Channel were wont to lower their top-masts as they swept past the hallowed spot.

\* The well is enclosed in a small Gothic building or crypt, under a small chapel, contiguous to the parish church. The basin is adorned with sculptures.



At Walsingham, in Norfolk, where formerly stood a celebrated abbey, and which was always a place of peculiar sanctity, the Wishing Wells are still extant. They are described as two small circular basins of stone, placed to the north-east of the site of the priory church, and connected with the Chapel of the Virgin. Their water had formerly a marvellous efficacy in curing disorders of the head and stomach—the special gift, no doubt, of the Holy Virgin, which she has resumed now that the majority of Englishmen are heretics! Yet she has graciously substituted one which seems to me of infinitely greater value. This is nothing less than the power, also given, as the reader is aware, to other wells, of accomplishing all human wishes. To attain so desirable an end, you must place your right knee, naked, on a stone placed for that purpose between the two wells; and you must do this with a proper amount of *faith*. You must then plunge your hands, up to the wrist, into the water of the wells, which are near enough to admit of the immersion. Now form your wish! But remember never to utter it with the lips, at any time, even to your dearest friend, or to yourself in the solitude of your chamber. Withdraw your hands, and swallow as much of the water as can be contained in the hollow of each. Within twelve months your wish, if your faith has attained to the proper maximum, will undoubtedly be fulfilled!

Healing Wells are scattered all over the kingdom. St. Madan's, in Cornwall, should be noticed, because so good and great a man as Bishop Hall could

gravely record his belief in the reality of a cure which its waters wrought upon a cripple. At Tottenham, in Middlesex, the Bishop's Well was considered peculiarly beneficial to invalids. And it is very probable that in many other cases the reputation was not altogether undeserved. The water might possess some mineral or chalybeate constituents, whose nature being unknown, their efficacy would seem altogether miraculous.

Then there were Divining Wells, which, by the motion of their waters, or in some other mysterious manner, foretold the events of the future. If you took the shirt or shift off an invalid, and flung it into the well of St. Oswald, near Newton, if the garment floated, its wearer would recover; if it sank, all hope must be abandoned. At St. Michael's in Banffshire, the oracle was given by an immortal fly, which was never absent from its duty. If the sober matron longed to know the issue of her husband's illness, or the love-sick nymph that of her languishing swain, they visited the fly-guarded well. If the fly appeared cheerful, the votary returned well pleased; if dejected, she went back with a sad brow and tearful eyes. A well at Inveresk always foretold a coming storm by the rumbling noise it made; another, at Oundle, in Northamptonshire, invariably drummed before any important event occurred.

A curious superstition attached to the well of St. Keyne, in Cornwall, whose crystal water bubbles out beneath a leafy canopy of four venerable trees—ash, oak, withy, and elm. Southey has told the legend in a humorous ballad:—

“ ‘ St. Keyne,’ quoth the Cornishman, ‘ many a time  
Drank of this crystal well,  
And before the angel summoned her,  
She laid on the water a spell :—

“ ‘ If the husband, of this gifted well  
Shall drink before his wife,  
A happy man henceforth is he.  
For he shall be master for life.

“ ‘ But if the wife should drink of it first,—  
Oh, pity the husband then !’  
The stranger stooped to the well of St. Keyne,  
And drank of the water again.

“ ‘ You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes !’  
He to the Cornishman said :  
But the Cornishman smiled as the stranger spake,  
And sheepishly shook his head.

“ ‘ I hastened as soon as the wedding was done,  
And left my wife in the porch ;  
But i’ faith she had been wiser than me,  
For she took a bottle to church !’ ”

From the reverence with which wells and fountains were regarded, and the general belief in their marvellous properties, sprang the custom of Well-dressing. The villagers went forth, on certain days, in gay procession, and with much singing and merriment, to decorate the favourite spring with boughs of trees and garlands of flowers wrought into fanciful devices. In some places it was the custom for the clergyman of the parish and his choir to take part in the ceremony, praying and singing psalms—a custom observed at Tissington, in Derbyshire, until a very recent period. The historian of Nottingham says: “ By a custom beyond memory, the mayor and aldermen of Nottingham and their wives have been used on Monday in Easter week, morning prayers ended, to march from the town to St. Anne’s

Well, having the town waits to play before them." Dr. Plot tells us that at Brewood and Bilbrook, in Staffordshire, the people were wont, on Holy Thursday, to adorn their wells with boughs and flowers. "This, it seems, they do, too, at all gospel places, whether wells, trees, or hills; which being now observed only for decency and custom's sake, is innocent enough." I might multiply my examples; but it is enough to say that throughout the kingdom the festival of Well-dressing was regularly observed. Nor can we deny that the *motive*—to praise God for the blessing of pure water—was highly laudable, even if superstition were too frequently blended with it. Our ancestors, it seems, believed too much; let us take care lest we believe too little!





## X.

### September.

"Next him September marched eke on foot ;  
Yet was he hoary, laden with the spoil  
Of harvest riches, which he made his boot,  
And him enriched with bounty of the soil."

SPENSER.



**W**HAT a change in the aspect of our English landscapes since last we glanced at them ! In the mid-summer they wore all the bloom and freshness of early manhood : now they are ripe with the full vigour of maturity. The promise of the year has been fulfilled. The song of Nature has swelled into its richest and grandest diapason. The husbandman's toil has won its own reward, and the fields are golden with the spoils of harvest. Everywhere—in orchard, and garden, and on the plains—the earth pours out her wine and oil, the abundance of her fatness. The vine droops with the burthen of its purple clusters, like a graceful maiden beneath the splendour of her ornaments. Against the wall hangs the rare downy cheek of the blushing peach ; the ruddy nectarine nods on its stem ; the plum sports its yellow or purple spheres amidst the dark

green leaves ; glorious apples, mellow and juicy—emerald green, ruby red, russet, or golden hued—and pears of half a hundred delicious varieties, seem ready to drop from the bending boughs, and delay our wandering steps, as Atalanta's fruit baffled the swift runners of old. And oh, in the merry woodland glades, there is now spread out a feast of plenty ! Never will the brown hazel-nuts taste more sweet than in this September month. And what a pleasure it is for boy and girl, for youth and childhood, to plunge deeply into the thick of the leafy copse, and swing oneself lightly from branch to branch in quest of plunder ! Who cares for brake, or briar, or bramble ?—on which, by the way, the pleasant blackberry now begins to ripen, so that we may vary our repast at our own good pleasure.

Now is the time for the sunny harvest field, and all its memories of love and hope. Now is the time when the swart reaper goes forth with sharpened sickle, and his practised arm brings down the full-eared wheat in waves of green and gold, spotted here and there with the blue corn-flower and the trailing convolvulus. Quickly are his precious conquests gathered together in well-bound sheaves, and carried away for stalling in some convenient corner. Then come the gleaners, in their quaint attire—fit figures for a picture of strange and unusual beauty !—and as they patiently collect the scattered grain, how one's thoughts are wafted back, through dim dead centuries, to the harvest-fields of old ; to those by the tawny Nile, where once the unhappy Israelites laboured ; to those of fertile

Canaan, still tenanted with the shadows of Abraham and his household, or of Boaz and the faithful Ruth,

“Standing in tears among the alien corn;”

to those of Galilee, where our Saviour taught his disciples the grand lesson of charity; or of Greece, which suggested to the poets so many sweet but half-forgotten legends! I love, therefore, to think of September as Keats has painted it:

“Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee, sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;  
Or on a half-reaped furrow, sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spare the next swathe, and all its twined flowers;  
And sometimes, like a gleaner, thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings, hour by hour.”

And while watching its keen, sweet cider draughts, its purple grapes, its brown ripe hops, or its teeming corn-fields, our souls may take delight in diverse strains of music; for the song-birds have not yet hushed their delicate voices—feel not as yet the fatal shadow of approaching winter. The twitter of the swallows may still be heard in the skies, before they hasten to the myrtle-bowers and olive-groves of the south. The soft treble of the redbreast rises from many a garden croft. Still the full jubilant melody of the lark ascends to the gate of heaven, like the prayer and praise of a happy spirit. Still the thrush and the blackbird sing merrily on the hillside tree, and the wren twitters amid the fragrant hedgerows.

Towards evening, if you wander by the lake or river, you will hear the murmur of the wheeling bat, and the low hum of the dancing gnats, which wheel round and round like the motes in a sunbeam.

“The sheep-bell tolleth curfew time ;  
The gnats, a busy rout,  
Fleck the warm air ; the distant owl  
Shouteth a sleepy shout ;  
The voiceless bat, more felt than seen,  
Is flitting round about.”—COVENTRY PATMORE

Nor is September deficient in the bloom of flowers. The gardens still wear their gayest honours, and dazzle the eye with the rich hues of geraniums and calceolarias, graceful fuchsias and bright nasturtiums, pansies, and pinks, and gillyflowers, gorgeous dahlias, resplendent phloxes, roses of numberless kinds and colours, marigolds, the balmy sweet-peas, lupins, larkspur, mignonnette, convolvuli, and a thousand others. Nor will you be wholly disappointed if you betake yourself to the woodland nook, the meadow side, or the bank of the slow-running stream. The meadow-saffron now opens its violet-tinted cups, so dear to those most assiduous of pilferers, the honied bees ; the tall and handsome Aaron's rod lifts up its crest of pride ; the healing marsh-mallow hides its rose-coloured blossoms among thick velvety leaves of green ; and in the valleys gleam the small crimson flowers and shines the plumed foliage of the beautiful pheasant's eye. This latter is known to botanists as the *Flos Adonis*—the flower which sprung into life from the blood of Adonis, when he perished before the eyes of Venus by the tusks of the cruel boar :—



"And in his blood, that on the ground lay spilled,  
A purple flower sprung up, checkered with white;  
Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood  
Which, in round drops, upon their whiteness stood."

SHAKESPEARE.

To September also belongs the bitter wormwood, whose pungency has passed into a proverb; the odorous lavender; the wild marigold; and the cudweed, or everlasting, better known as the *immortelle*, with which the Romans crowned the statues of their gods, and whose wreaths we moderns fling upon the graves of the departed.

September is the month of the harvest-moon, which now hangs its full-robed shield of silver in the heavens, as a sign that man's victory is won. In its ample light, how weirdly beautiful appear the close-reaped fields, the blue hillsides, the placid waters, and the changing foliage of the woods. As you gaze upon its broad bright brow, a thousand memories of song and fable crowd upon your mind. You recall Homer's famous picture of the moonlit camp before Troy; Ben Jonson's glorious lyric; Shakspeare's picturesque scene between Lorenzo and Jessica; Byron amid the haunted ruins of the Colosseum, or, as Lioni, musing over the past glories of Venice; Milton's tribute to the "apparent queen;" Sir Philip Sidney's noble sonnet,

"With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies!"

and the impassioned apostrophe of Keats,

"O maker of sweet poets! dear delight  
Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers!"

But with these, I take it, my young readers

will be familiar ; and therefore do I venture to set forth, as a close to my discursive notes on September, some simple verses of my own, in honour of the "Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair"—Diana of the Silver Bow !

## MOONLIGHT IN SEPTEMBER.

I love the moonlight, paling o'er  
The placid earth with argent sheen ;  
Even such a garb our planet wore  
When first by angel-watchers seen.

When all the spheres with music rang,  
And space was filled with airs divine,  
And fair Intelligences sang—  
"Glorious, O God, this work of thine !"

Less dear to me the golden glow  
Of noontide, veiling earth in mist ;  
Less dear the sunset's regal show  
Of purple, gold, and amethyst ;

Less dear the morning's opal lights,  
Far trembling o'er the eastern hills,  
Than that soft splendour of the nights  
Which vale, and mead, and woodland fills !

Shine forth, O Moon, on nodding trees ;  
Shine forth, O Moon, on lake and stream :  
As when Endymion, 'mid the pines,  
Lay folded in a charmfu! dream :

As when, one gentle autumn night,  
Where Venice lifts her crown of towers,  
Lorenzo wooed his Jessica,  
Song-lulled in blooming garden bowers :

As when, in the old happy time,  
I wandered o'er the well-known leas,  
And melodies from lyres renowned  
Came floating on the dreamy breeze :

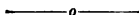
The strains of many a deathless bard—  
Brave Homer, flushed with battle-fire ;  
The calmer mood of Maro's lays ;  
Anacreon's Dionsian lyre ;

The gorgeous roll of Milton's song,  
Like organ-tones or swelling seas ;  
And Shakspeare's verse, which runneth o'er  
With deep Orphean mysteries.

Shine forth, O Moon !—the years have past,  
And summed their gain and loss as nought ;  
And many a bubble-hope has burst,  
And fallen many a daring thought.

Yet still I look upon thy face  
With that high love I knew of yore,  
And feel thy luminous beauty rise,  
And, like an inspiration, pour

Through each quick vein its pulsing tide !  
Then shine, O Moon, in living light ;  
Their Sun-god Persians may adore—  
Be mine the crescent Queen of Night !



### **HARVEST CUSTOMS IN THE OLDEN TIME.**

"Crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,  
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,  
Comes jovial on."—THOMSON.

Now is England merry England indeed, when men may everywhere see stooks rising like stacks, and far and wide, over the tree-speckled champaign, rejoice in the sun-giving promise of a glorious harvest-home. I have borrowed this sentence from worthy Christopher North, who continues,—The rest intervenes of two sunny Sabbaths, sent to dry the brows of labour, and give the last ripeness to the overladen stalks that, top-heavy with aliment, fall over in their yellowy whiteness into the fast reaper's hands. Few fields now—but, here and there, one thin and greenish, of cold, unclean, or

stony soil—are waving in the shadowy winds; for all are cleared but some stooked stubbles, from which the stooks are fast disappearing, as the huge wains seem to halt for a moment, impeded by the gates they hide, and then, crested perhaps with laughing boys and girls,

“Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings.”

No, not rings; but, with a *cheerful dull sound*, ploughing along the black soil, the *clean dirt*, almost up to the axle-tree: and then, as the wheels, rimmed, you might almost think, with silver, reach the road, macadamized till it acts like a railway, how glides along downhill the moving mountain! And see, now, the growing stack glittering with a charge of pitchforks! The trams fly up from Dobbin's back, and a shoal of sheaves overflows the mire. Up they go, tossed from sinewy arms like feathers, and the stack grows before your eyes, fairly proportioned as a beehive, without line or measure, but shaped by the look and the feel—true almost as the spring instinct of the nest-building bird.

And when this last task is finished, the farmer and his men burst out into exuberant mirth. In every age and every nation the ingathering of the harvest has been made the occasion of great rejoicing. The Harvest-Home of England—the Kirn of Scotland—is identical in spirit with the festive celebrations of the ancients to the goddess Farina, and their joyous rites in honour of the prolific Ceres. In like manner the Jews made merry when the golden corn was “saved.” In like manner the sons

and daughters of Italy rejoice when the vintage is over.

In the olden time it was the custom with our English ancestors to surround the waggon, or stock cart, which carried home the last cut grain; and, while a pipe and tabor played merrily in front, they danced to and fro with the lightsomeness which comes from a happy heart, and sung aloud or rent the air with shouts. Oh, 'tis the merry time, says an old writer, wherein honest neighbours make good cheer, and God is glorified in his blessings on the earth! The cart was usually decorated with a figure made of corn, and quaintly attired—a figure crowned with flowers, a sheaf under her arm, and a sickle in her hand. This was called the Maiden, or the Harvest Queen, and seems to have been a tradition of the Roman Ceres. Occasionally one of the prettiest of the village girls took the place of the figure, as the poet Bloomfield describes :

“ Home came the jovial hockey load,  
Last of the whole year's crop ;  
And Grace among the green boughs rode,  
Right plump upon the top.

“ This way and that the waggon reeled,  
And never queen rode higher ;  
Her cheeks were coloured in the field,  
And ours before the fire.”

A similar custom prevailed in some parts of Scotland. The close of the harvest was celebrated with a *Maiden Feast* ; to prepare for which the last handful of corn reaped in the field was called the Maiden. It was dexterously contrived that this should fall into the hands of the prettiest girl in the

company; whereupon it was decorated with ribands, and carried home in triumph, to the jovial music of fiddles and bagpipes. A substantial dinner was given to the whole band, and the evening spent in jollity and dancing, over which presided the winner of "the maiden," as queen of the feast. Afterwards this sheaf of corn was dressed out—generally in the form of a cross—and hung up, with the date of the year, in some conspicuous part of the house.

And now for a glimpse of harvest-home in Devonshire. Here, when a farmer finished his reaping, a small quantity of the ears of the last corn were twisted or tied together into a curious kind of figure, which was brought home with great acclamations, suspended over the great dining-table, and kept until the following year. The owner considered it exceedingly unfortunate to part with this, which was called "a knack." The reapers shouted and hallooed, "a knack! a knack!" or,

"Well cut! well bound!

Well shocked! well saved from the ground!"

Different places had their different ceremonies. In Hertfordshire and Shropshire there flourished a harvest sport called "Crying the mare." The reapers tied together the tops of the last blades of corn, or the *mare*, and, standing at some distance, threw their sickles at it. He who cut the knot, won the prize. At Hitchin each farmer would drive furiously homeward with the last load of his corn, while the people ran after him with bowls full of water, in order to throw on it a libation. This,

you may be sure, was accompanied with much laughter and shouting.

In some parts of Yorkshire there is—or was—given, at the close of the reaping, a prize sheaf to be run for; and when all the corn was safely housed in the stack-yard, an entertainment, called the “Inning goose,” terminated the harvest season.

Finally, harvest customs, as they prevailed in the olden time, are quaintly summed up by the quaint old Elizabethan poet Herrick, in his verses on

#### THE HOCK-CART.

“Come sons of summer, by whose toll  
We are the lords of wine and oil;  
By whose tough labours and rough hands,  
We rip up first, then reap our lands;  
Crowned with the ears of corn, now come,  
And to the pipe sing harvest home.  
Come forth, my lord, and see the cart,  
Dressed up with all the country art.  
See here a maukin, there a sheet,  
As spotless pure as it is sweet;  
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,  
Clad all in linen, white as lilies.  
The harvest swains and wenches bound,  
For joy, to see the hock-cart crowned.

“About the cart, hear how the rout  
Of rural younglings raise the shout;  
Pressing before, some coming after—  
Those with a shout, and these with laughter.  
Some bless the cart; some kiss the sheaves;  
Some prank them up with oaken leaves;  
Some cross the fill-horse; some, with great  
Devotion, stroke the home-borne wheat.  
Well, on, brave boys! to your lord's hearth,  
Glittering with fire, where, for your mirth,  
Ye shall see, first, the large and chief  
Foundation of your feast, fat beef;  
With upper stories, mutton, veal,  
And bacon (which makes full the meal),  
With sev'ral dishes standing by,  
As, here a custard, there a pie.”



## XI.

### Christmas Merry-Makings.

"So now is come our joyful'st feast ;  
 Let every man be jolly ;  
 Each room with ivy leaves is drest,  
 And every post with holly.  
 Though some churls at our mirth repine,  
 Round your foreheads garlands twine ;  
 Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,  
 And let us all be merry !"

GEORGE WITHER.

"Come, bring with a noise,  
 My merrie, merrie boys,  
 The Christmas log to the firing ;  
 While my good dame, she  
 Bids ye all be free,  
 And drink to your heart's desiring."

HERRICK.



AS we have briefly glanced at the aspects of Nature in Spring, and Summer, and Autumn, it seems desirable—before we gossip about the Christmas customs of olden times—to say something of the characteristics of Winter. It is not, I think, an unpleasant season. Truly the light and glow, the warmth of colour, the fulness of life, have faded from the landscape. The trees have shed their glorious foliage; most of our singing-birds



are silent, or have flown far away to the sunny south; the lover who would gather a posy for his lady-love must be content with the holly and the laurel, instead of bud or blossom; but when gray winter shakes forth the silver snow on wood and meadow, who would wish for fairer garniture? Is there anything lovelier in this visible world—anything more suggestive of purity and innocence—than the soft, white, feathery snow? How silently it falls upon the earth! Not a sound, not a murmur tells you of its descent, and yet when you go afield in the morning, you find the landscape mantled over with its crystals. Deep, deep it lies; gathering in valleys and hollows into an impassable barrier, which checks your progress more effectually than the strongest masonry. It is the only thing in Nature which gives the idea of uniformity. Covered by the snow, hedge and tree and pasture, cornland, barren heath, and stony waste, seem equally beautiful. Look where you will, the dazzling splendour confronts you, as if all earth were made after one bright pattern. Snow-pearls hang upon the boughs, hang on every blade of grass, accumulate on the stalks in the farmer's yard, on the cottage-roof, on the long lines of level hedge; amass in radiant piles on the terraced hill-side, and give out such a lustre that even the starless, moonless night is *whitened* by it!

But a current of warmth steals into our frosty atmosphere, wafted from the genial Tropics. Then does this magnificence disappear, and we see the landscape in all its nakedness. How gaunt and

skeleton-like seem the gibbering trees, except where the eternal ivy has clothed them with its living verdure! And how dull would be the scene, were it not lighted up with the crimson berries of the glossy holly-bushes! Or enriched, in quaint old gardens, with the pink cuplike flowers of the Christmas rose! How gladly we hail the occasional beams of the wintry sun, struggling redly through the dim dull haze! Then the wren comes out of his snug little nest beneath the thatched eaves, or among the ivy-masses of the gray church-tower; and the black-bird darts through the leafless bushes in quest of food; and the robin—

“Sings amid the bowers,  
Now bare and desolate, his simple lay;”

and the water-wagtail hovers about the half-frozen marsh. The “flocks of ocean” raise their hoarse scream on the fishy shore; teal, and shoveller, and eider duck, the soland, the gannet, and the gray goose sporting among the fens, clanging about the hard rocks, or gathering on the banks of the briny estuary. Even in winter, you see, the landscape is not wholly inanimate, not wholly dead. The earth is resting, but in its very repose lie the seeds of future activity; and this icy, almost birdless, flowerless, leafless winter is the actual progenitor of the abundant spring.

The two *Christmas plants* which from eldest time have earned the love and admiration of men, are the holly and the mistletoe. They form a natural couple, an harmonious pair. You would no more think of

dissociating them than of parting blind Homer and blind Milton from their grand fellowship as kings of epic poetry. On Christmas Eve, in days of old, even as in our own days, they flourish in happy companionship about windows, and ceilings, and doorways,—a pleasant intermixture of scarlet, and emerald green, and pearly white:—

“ On Christmas Eve . . .  
The hall was dressed with *holly* green ;  
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,  
To gather in the *mistletoe*.”—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The mistletoe, which is so rich in associations of love and tenderness, is supposed to be propagated in its natural state by the *missel-thrush*. It was long considered impossible to propagate it artificially, but this object has at length been secured; the berries are bruised, and their viscous nature inducing them to adhere to the bark of fruit trees, they quickly germinate. It grows plentifully on the apple trees of the west midland counties, but is now very rarely found about its ancient friend, the oak. Every reader knows that it played an important part in the mystic rites of the Druids, while, at a later period, it was regarded as a sovereign remedy for almost every ill which human flesh is heir to. I cannot find when the observance first began that is now universally associated with it; namely, for every swain who catches under its glistening berries the not unwilling damsel, to demand a kiss from her rosy lips. Archdeacon Nares informs us that the maid not kissed under it at Christmas will not be married for a twelvemonth. The poet Gay speaks

of it as placed among the evergreen decorations of our churches, but in this he certainly errs :—

“ Christmas, the joyous period of the year !  
Now with bright holly all the temples strow,  
With laurel green, and sacred mistletoe ! ”—GAY.

It is so well known as a secular, and, even so to speak, as a profane Druidical superstitious mirth-making plant, that I am convinced it seldom figured in our sacred places.

A curious Norse legend is connected with the mistletoe. Baldur, the god of poetry and eloquence, second son of the great Odin and the beautiful Friga, one day related to his mother a dream which he had had, and which seemed to foretell his death. To save her son from such a dread calamity, Friga summoned all the powers of earth and air, and fire and water, to her presence, and made them swear that they would do no injury to Baldur. Thus protected, the young deity went forth unfearing, and shared in all the combats of the gods. His enemy, the gigantic Loki, grew enraged at his insensibility to spear, axe, or arrow, and endeavoured to discover the secret. For this purpose, disguised as an aged woman, he entertained Friga with lavish praise of her beautiful and brilliant son. She boasted, in return, that his fearlessness would bring no hurt upon him; since all the powers of Nature—save, indeed, one trivial little plant, the mistletoe, which she had passed over as of no importance—had sworn to her an oath never to injure Baldur. Loki immediately betook himself to Hödur, the blind god of war, and prompted him to contend with the

arrogant son of Friga. "I am blind," replied Hödur, "and I am without weapons." Loki, however, placed in his hands a stout bow, and an arrow fashioned from the mistletoe plant, and led him to a convenient place for taking aim at his enemy. "Now, shoot," said he, "for Baldur is before thee." And Hödur's sinewy arm discharged the fatal shaft with such effect, that Baldur was mortally stricken on the spot.

A favourite plant for decorating both the church and the home has ever been the *holly*. The custom was a Pagan one, borrowed from the Roman Saturnalia, but wisely sanctified to Christian uses. Why the holly should be more esteemed than the laurel or ivy seems easy of explanation. Ivy was associated with Bacchus, and the rites of the Dionysian god; even laurel has something of a secular character; but the green holly, with its bright red berries, can have no such objections made to it. An old carol sings its praises :—

"Holly stands *in the hall*, fair to behold;  
Ivy stand *without* the door; she is full sore a-cold.

"Holly and his merry men, they dance and they sing,  
Ivy and her maidens, they weep and they wring.

"Holly hath birdies, a full fair flock,  
The nightingale, the popinjay, and the laverock.

"Good ivy? What birds hast thou?  
None but the owlet that cries 'How! how!'"

The holly is, indeed, the true Christmas tree, and a fair and seemly thing it is, with its "native coral

bright, and armed leaves." It is aptly taken as a symbol that the virtues of a good man's heart flourish greenest and most vigorous in the dark days of adversity. Its uses are many. As a hedge it forms an almost impregnable barrier: it mocks, says John Evelyn, the modest assaults of the weather, beasts, or hedge-breakers. Evelyn, by the way, had a famous holly-hedge at his garden of Sayes Court, near Deptford. It was five feet broad, nine feet high, and four hundred feet long. When Peter the Great resided awhile at Sayes Court, his favourite amusement was to place one of his attendants in a wheelbarrow, and drive furiously at this beautiful glossy hedge, whose glories, need I add, he seriously defaced.

But I must take my leave of both mistletoe and holly, bidding farewell to the latter in some noble lines by one of our English poets:—

"O reader! hast thou ever stood to see  
The holly-tree?  
The eye that contemplates it well perceives  
Its glossy leaves;  
Ordered by an intelligence so wise  
As might confound an Atheist's sophistries.

"Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen  
Wrinkled and keen;  
No grazing cattle through their prickly round  
Can reach to wound;  
But, as they grow where nothing is to fear,  
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

"Then, though abroad perchance I might appear  
Harsh and austere,  
To those who on my leisure would intrude,  
Reserved and rude,  
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,  
Like the high leaves upon the holly tree.

"And should my youth, as youth is apt, I know,  
Some harshness show,  
All vain asperities I day by day  
Would wear away,  
Till the smooth temper of my age should be  
Like the high leaves upon the holly tree."—SOUTHEY.

One of the ordinary concomitants of a Christmas in the olden times was the *Yule Log*, or *Block*, which was placed on the wide stone hearth amidst great rejoicings, and generally fired with a brand saved from the last year's log. Loud was the mirth if it burned and sparkled bravely throughout the night, for then it pretokened a year of happiness; keen was the sorrow if it suddenly died out. In northern England, so long as the log lasted—and it was, in fact, a great tree, burning for nights and days—the servants of the household were privileged to have ale at every meal. The present writer has helped to roll this notable piece of timber upon the Christmas hearth, and has seen it baptized, as it were, with an abundant libation:—

"Come, bring with a noise,  
My merrie, merrie boys,  
The Christmas log to the firing;  
While my good dame, she  
Bids ye all be free,  
And drink to your heart's desiring.  
With the last year's brand  
Light the new block, and  
For good success in his spending,  
On your psalteries play,  
That sweet luck may  
Come while the log is a-tending."—HERRICK.

Relative to the word *Yule*, frequently used for Christmas, philologists have differed widely. One wiseacre will have it that it arises from the Hebrew

*lile*, night; and *lile*, he says, is formed from a verb signifying "to howl," because at night the beasts of the forest go about howling for their prey! But *Wheel* in English, *Hule* in Hindustani, *Wellen* in German, *Volvo* in Latin, *Houle* (and thence *Noël*) in French, are all cognate words—words closely allied to one another—and all conveying the same idea of "turning" or "revolving;" because it is at this period, the winter-solstice, that the sun apparently *returns* to commence his annual revolution.

Anciently, therefore, the Yule rejoicings were designed in celebration of this winter-solstice—this turning-point of the year—and of the "consequently approaching prolongation of the days," as is demonstrated by the emblematic Christmas candles and Yule logs, symbols of increasing light and heat. The custom was Roman; being afterwards adopted by the Saxons, its original meaning was lost or forgotten. In this instance, as in many others, the primitive church, unwilling to tear up too rudely the old ties and relationships of society, seized upon the pagan rite, and gave them a Christian character, by associating them for evermore with the nativity of the Saviour. What season could be worthier of human joy and festive celebration than that which recalls to us the grandest event in the history of our race? So long as we avoid excess, our mirth will surely be blessed by Heaven; and we may hallow it by deeds of charity and love. Long, then, may the Yule-log and the Christmas tapers continue to symbolize the Light which first visibly shone upon the world, that sacred eve, when the star suspended in



the western sky became the guide and herald of the Chaldean magi.

One of the old customs which still lingers in quiet drowsy towns, and far-away villages, is the singing of *Christmas Carols*. In the earlier ages of the Church, grave bishops joined with their clergy in singing these pious songs. Jeremy Taylor, the "golden-mouthed," quaintly observes that the "Gloria in Excelsis," chanted by angel-voices in the ears of the wondering shepherds on our Lord's birth-night, was the *earliest* Christmas carol. At all events, this species of devout poesy is of most ancient date. Some carols are extant which belong to the thirteenth century. But the primitive Christians were certainly acquainted with them. Tertullian says, "that at their feasts they brought those who could sing into their midst, and made them sing a song to God." In the English churches, it was customary for these carols to be sung instead of psalms; and the clerk, at their conclusion, would loudly express his wishes for "a merry Christmas and a happy New Year" to all the congregation. Formerly they were the delight of kings and nobles. At the sovereign's Christmas festival, according to Leland, the dean and choristers of the royal chapel were seated in the middle of the hall, and "incontinently, after the first course, sung a carol." Herrick, the delightful old poet of the Hesperides, gives us "a Christmas carol sung to the king in the presence at Whitehall." It concludes as follows:—

"The Darling of the World is come,  
And fit it is we find a room  
To welcome Him. The nobler part  
Of all the house here is the heart.

*Chorus*—Which we will give Him; and bequeath  
This hollie and this ivie wreath,  
To do Him honour who's our King,  
And lord of all this revelling."

A famous carol is still sung, on Christmas Day, at Queen's College, Oxford, when the servants place on the table the celebrated traditional dish of the boar's head. In Wynkyn de Worde's version (1521) it runs as follows, except that I have modernized the spelling:—

*"Caput apri defero,  
Reddens laudes Domino.*

"The boar's head in hand bring I,  
With garlands gay and rosemary;  
I pray you all sing merrily,  
*Qui estis in convivio.*

"The boar's head, I understand,  
Is the chief service in this land;  
Look wherever it be fande,  
*Servite cum cantico.*

"Be glad, lords, both more and lasse;  
For this hath ordayned our stewarde,  
To cheer you all this Christmas,  
The boar's head, with mustard!"

On the Christmas table of our jovial forefathers, while blithe carols sounded in their ears, and the holly sparkled cheerily in the blaze of the crackling Yule-log, be sure the *Wassail Bowl* gave forth its rich and odorous steam. Herrick shall tell us how it was compounded:—

"Next crown the bowl full,  
With gentle lamb's wool;

Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger;  
With store of ale too;  
And thus ye must do  
To make the wassail a swinger."

In plain prose: take a gallon or so of bright amber ale, and boil it with an admixture of sugar and rare spices, until a creamy froth mantles to the surface. Now pour the steaming liquid into an ample bowl, and set swimming upon it a dozen or more of roasted apples. Thus shall you have a nectar-draught—a dish fit to set before a king; something so soft, and sweet, and warming, that our forefathers expressively christened it "lamb's wool." Stout knights of the old Norman race—Tudor nobles—hearty squires loyal to the exiled Stuart—the courtly Hanoverian gentlemen—warriors, wits, statesmen—burghers and yeomen;—from hand to hand has passed the wassail-bowl, in commemoration of a festive time. In Ben Jonson's "Masque of Christmas" occurs this stage-direction: "Enter Wassel, like a neat sempster and songster, her page bearing a brown bowl, drest with ribbons and rosemary, before her." No Christmas feast was complete without the immortal "brown bowl," swimming over with the delectable ambrosia of Christmas!

The word "Wassail" is generally derived from the Saxon *Waes heil*, "Be in health." The custom is erroneously said to have originated in an historical incident, for which our only authority is Geoffrey of Monmouth—by no means a too veracious chronicler. Shortly after Hengist the Saxon had invaded England, at the request of the British chieftain Guorteyrn

(Vortigern), he invited the latter to a splendid banquet. His daughter Rouix, or Rowena, a fair, blue-eyed, golden-haired princess, in the course of the feast, entered the royal presence, bearing a cup of wine, and addressed the British chieftain: *Louerd Kyng, Waes heil*; to which the love-stricken Guorteyrn replied, *Drinc heil*.

“Health, my lord king, the sweet Rowena said;  
Health, cried the chieftain to the Saxon maid:  
Then gaily rose, and, ’midst the concourse wide,  
Kissed her hale lips, and placed her by his side.  
At the soft scene such gentle thoughts abound,  
That health and kisses ’mongst the guests went round.  
From this the social custom took its rise,  
We still retain, and must for ever prize.”—MASON.

This drinking custom was undoubtedly a Saxon one, which, in course of time, became limited to the Christmas festival—held at a season when class was knit to class, if but for awhile, by the ties of common fellowship in the mercies which our Lord’s nativity bestowed on all mankind. *Waes heil*, friend and brother! Be in health!

The Romans used, it should be remembered, at this same wintry period of the year, to hold a wild holiday of license, called the *Saturnalia*—disguising themselves in mock costumes, and finding pleasant entertainment in the mishaps which arose from mistaken identity.

This, too, was one of the pagan customs adopted, or rather connived at, by the early Christian church. Though it appears to have been forbidden by the fathers, its freedom and exuberance of mirth so en-

deared it to the people, that it contrived to hold its place for centuries. Men and women changed their attire, and strolled into neighbours' houses, making right merry cheer, so long as Christmas authorized the pleasant fooling. At a later period, they personated the most grotesque characters, and, gathering in groups, enacted a species of play or "pageant," of a bombastic or semi-satirical character. The "miracles," or "mystery plays," or "moralities," were a clerical form of this entertainment. But less of the religious element seems to have commingled with the Christmas mummings than with the mysteries performed at other seasons of the year. They were performed, moreover, in every considerable household, from that of the sovereign to that of the well-to-do "lord of the manor." Then comes, says an old tract, mumming or masquerading, when the squire's wardrobe is ransacked for dresses of all kinds. Corks are burnt to black the faces of the fair, or make deputy *mustachios*; and every one in the family, except the squire himself, must be transformed.

Stow, the chronicler, records a gorgeous mumming, or mummerie, performed by the citizens of London, for disport of the young prince Richard, son of Edward the Black Prince. "On the Sunday before Candlemas, in the night, one hundred and thirty citizens, disguised and well-horsed, in a mummary, with sound of trumpets, shackbuts, cornets, shawms, and other minstrels, and innumerable torch-lights of wax, rode from Newgate through Chepe, over the bridge, through Southwark, and so to Kennington,

beside Lambeth, where the young prince remained with his mother. In the first rank did ride forty-eight in the likeness and habit of esquires, two and two together, clothed in red coats, and gowns of say, or sandal, with comely vizors on their faces. After them came riding forty-eight knights, in the same livery of colour and stuff. Then followed one richly arrayed, like an emperor; and after him some distance, one stately attired, like a pope, whom followed twenty-four cardinals; and, after them, eight or ten, with black vizors, not amiable, as if they had been legates from some foreign princes. These maskers, after they had entered the manor of Kennington, alighted from their horses, and entered the hall on foot; which done, the prince, his mother, and the lords, came out of the chamber into the hall, whom the mummers did salute; showing, by a pair of dice upon the table, their desire to play with the young prince, which they so handled that the prince did always win when he cast them. Then the mummers set to the prince three jewels, one after another; which were, a bowl of gold, a cup of gold, and a ring of gold, which the prince won at three casts. Then they set to the prince's mother [fair Joan of Kent], the duke, the earls, and other lords, to every one a ring of gold, which they did also win. After which they were feasted, and the music sounded, the prince and lords danced on the one part with the mummers, which did also dance; which jollity being ended, they were again made to drink, and then departed in order as they came. The like was to King Henry the Fourth, in the second of his

reign, he then keeping his Christmas at Eltham; twelve aldermen of London, and their sons, rode in a mumming, and had great thanks."

To this same Harry the Fourth a certain Twelfth Night mumming, in 1516, might have proved but a sorry jest. The Dukes of Aumerle, Surrey, and Exeter, with some other disaffected nobles, had projected giving one, to serve as a cloak for a scheme of assassination. The plot, however, was revealed to the king by Aumerle, and the "mumming" never took place.

One of the most popular mummeries was founded on the favourite legend of St. George and the Dragon; and this rude burlesque still retains its popularity. It is acted both in England and Scotland. In some of the Scotch villages the actors—always young lads—call themselves "Colossians," "Christmas Boys" or "Guisers," and go from house to house in the evenings, soliciting some small reward. Their disguises are more or less elaborate, according to their taste and means. One represents St. George, another the Doctor, a third the Turk, a fourth the Dragon; and other characters are occasionally introduced, without much regard to those essentials of the regular drama, "local colouring," or "unity of action." As a specimen of the doggrel recited, I give St. George's speech, promising that it is recorded from my recollection of a bygone Christmas performance:—

"Here am I, St. George, with armour bright;  
I am a gallant champion, and a worthy knight.  
Seven dreary years was I in cavern kept,  
And out of that into a prison leapt;

From out of that upon a heap of stones,  
Doing much mischief to my bones.  
Many a giant did I subdue,  
Before I ran the horrid dragon through.  
First I fought in France,  
Next I fought in Spain;  
Then I came to Scotland,  
To fight the Turk again."

The Christmas festivities of the olden time were frequently placed under the direction of an important personage—the *Lord of Misrule*, who may briefly be described as a mummer on a grand scale. He was the Master of the Ceremonies, and provided for the decent ordering of the entertainments. His authority was despotic; no appeal could be lodged from his fiat; "all and every person or persons whatsoever" were at his command, "whenever he sounded his trumpet or music." He invariably assumed some high-sounding title, such as Prince of Alba Fortunata, Lord of No Man's Land, or Duke of St. Giles; and he bestowed mock dignities on his attendants, as Earl of Bloomsbury, the Chevalier Luckless, Sir Randle Rackabite, and the like. Knights and squires, pages, hobby-horses, clowns, dragons, and trumpeters, followed in his train. At a Christmas celebrated, says Warton, in the Hall of the Middle Temple, in 1635, the jurisdiction, privileges, and parade of this mock monarch, are thus circumstantially described: "He was attended by his lord-keeper, lord-treasurer, with eight white staves; a captain of his band of pensioners, and of his guard; and with two chaplains, who were so seriously impressed with an idea of his regal dignity, that when they preached before him on the pre-



ceding Sunday in the Temple Church, on ascending the pulpit they saluted him with three long bows! He dined, both in the hall and in his privy chamber, under a cloth of estate. The poleaxes for his gentlemen pensioners were borrowed of Lord Salisbury. Lord Holland, his temporary justice in eyre, supplied him with venison on demand; and the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London with wine. On Twelfth Day, at going to church, he received many petitions, which he gave to his master of requests; and, like other kings, he had a favourite, whom, with others, gentlemen of high quality, he knighted at returning from church. His expenses, all from his own purse, amounted to £2000." A magnificent Lord of Misrule, truly!

In his introduction to the sixth canto of "*Marmion*," Sir Walter Scott has described all these rare old Christmas customs with graphic force. It will probably be familiar to many of our readers, but none will object to peruse it again.

"The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide;  
The huge hall-table's oaken face,  
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,  
Bore then upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,  
By old blue-coated serving-man;  
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,  
Crested with bays and rosemary.  
The wassail round in good brown bowls,  
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.  
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by  
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie.  
Then came the merry masquers in,  
And carols roared with blithesome din;

If unmelodious was the song,  
It was a hearty note, and strong.  
Who lists may in their mumming see  
Traces of ancient mystery ;  
White shirts supplied the masquerade,  
And smutted cheeks the visors made ;  
But, oh ! what masquers, richly dight,  
Can boast of bosoms half so light !  
England was merry England, when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale ;  
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;  
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer  
The poor man's heart through half the year."

It has been supposed that the mince-pies and plum-puddings—without which no Christmas board can be considered complete—are intended to represent the sweetmeats and dainty cates which, on the vigil of the Nativity, were offered to the fathers in the Vatican at Rome. I should rather understand them to commemorate the gifts of the wise men who came from afar to worship the infant Jesus, "bringing spices." At all events, they date from a very remote antiquity. In a curious old tract, "Round About our Coal Fire," published some two hundred and forty years ago, reference is made to "the sirloins of beef, the minced-pies, the plum-porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plum-puddings." In the old metrical history of Jack Horner, "containing his witty tricks and pleasant pranks, which he played from his youth to his riper years, right pleasant and delightful for winter and summer's recreation," we read,—

"And in the corner would he sit  
In Christmas holidays,  
When friends they did together meet  
To pass away the time,

Why, little Jack, he sure would eat  
His Christmas pie in rhyme;  
And said, Jack Horner in the corner  
Eats good Christmas pie,  
And with his thumb pulls out the plum,  
And said, Good boy am I!

"These pretty verses which he made  
Upon his Christmas cheer,  
Did gain him love, as it is said,  
Of all both far and near."

Ben Jonson, in his famous "Masque of Christmas," performed before James I. and his queen in 1616, introduces as characters in the drama the distinguished personages of "Mince Pie" and "Baby Cake." The Puritans, during their brief supremacy, endeavoured to put them down, representing them as "superstitious observances" and "Popish relics;" but the heart of the nation was too sound and genial, and refused to abandon all the "cakes and ale" at the bidding of sour-visaged fanatics. No plum-pudding! no mince-pie! I ask any boy or girl of healthy appetite and well-regulated mind, whether he would care for a Christmas which had neither of these comestibles? Would they not exclaim with the old poet,—

"Let Christmas boast her customary treat,  
A mixture rare of suet, currants, meat,  
Where various tastes combine, the *piquant* and the sweet."

But I must draw my notes to a conclusion. These Scenes of the Olden Time present so many attributes of interest and entertainment, that I might continue, through several volumes, to shift the slides in my magic-lantern. With those already exhibited I trust my readers are not discontented. Such scenes can never be revived; it would be a retrograde step to

attempt their revival; but the good fellowship between man and man which they encouraged, the friendly relations between rich and poor, the genial humour, the innocent hilarity, the freedom from selfishness and greed, which they tended to promote, may surely still be cultivated. Their occasional grossness and license cannot be fairly set against their good, and I hold it to be for the benefit of the commonwealth that all its members should "make merry" at certain national holidays.

Our ancestors, says one of the Georgian essayists, considered Christmas in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival; and accordingly distinguished it by devotion, by vacation from business, by merriment, and hospitality. They seemed eagerly bent on making themselves and everybody about them happy. With what punctual zeal did they wish one *a merry Christmas!* and what an omission would it have been thought to have concluded a letter without the *Compliments of the Season!* The great hall resounded with the tumultuous joys of servants and tenants; and the gambols they played served as amusement to the lord of the mansion and his family, who, by encouraging every art conducive to mirth and entertainment, endeavoured to soften the rigour of the season, and mitigate the influence of winter."

The "soul of good" which I would wish my young readers to see in these Scenes of the Olden Time lies embodied in the declaration, that "our ancestors seemed eagerly bent on making themselves and everybody about them happy." Each one of us may

imitate them in this respect. Each one of us may contribute to the happiness of some brother or sister by acts of self-denial, generous confidence, genial feeling, and tender sympathy. How much may we do in the fond home-circle, how much in our social relationships, to plant with flowers the path of life! How may we contribute, by honour and loyalty and truth, by manly piety and noble exertion, to promote the glorious dreams of the poet, who, at this closing season of the year, feels his heart moved by regret over the evil around him, and anticipations of the good to come; and who, with his heart thus astir, exclaims, as the midnight chimes fall sadly on his ear,—

“ Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky !

“ Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
The year is going; let him go :  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

“ Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

“ Ring out foul shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

“ Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be !”

TENNYSON.

So may we turn with hopeful assurance from the scenes of the past to the brighter, purer, heavenlier scenes of the future. I love to indulge myself in

visions of a Golden Age, when the harsh barriers that now separate classes shall be swept away; when we shall value one another for the good that may be in us, and not for merely adventitious circumstances; when the trumpet of battle shall no longer have power to fire our blood and kindle our souls; when in wealthy cities men and women shall no longer die of starvation; when foul diseases shall have ceased to sweep through noisome alleys and reeking lanes; when the cry of the suffering and neglected children, wan with hunger and worn with cruel treatment, shall no longer ascend to heaven in testimony against us; when commerce will cloak no more the greed of the dishonest, nor vice sit in the high places to receive the homage of the base; when the liar, and the cheat, and the godless shall shrink ashamed into the shadow; when the law of love shall prevail over a happy world! Visions these, you tell me? Nay; not if we strive, each in his own sphere, to do something towards their realization. Not if we are ever bent on carrying out the divine message—"Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." Visions! Ah! if we could but translate them into *facts*, how they would outdazzle and excel even the brightest, gayest, truest, and most picturesque of the

SCENES OF OLDEN TIME!









